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**Where Actions Speak Louder than Words:
The Experience of Trainee Cooks on Work Placement in Singapore**

by

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics

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Abbreviations

DATA

FN: Fieldnotes

REC: Recording

INT: Interview

RD: Research diary

RESEARCH SITES

TVC: The Vanda Club

HS: Harajuku Street

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Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

The aim of this research is to illuminate the experience of vocational trainees, specifically trainee cooks, on work placement. Previous ethnographic research in vocational education has tended to converge on sociologically oriented concerns and link the provision of vocational education to the reproduction of social classes. This provided a rich but nonetheless limited understanding of the student experience in this education sector. Professional socialisation studies typically focused on students in higher education and newcomers working in white-collar settings; few studies were carried out with individuals joining vocational trades. Moreover non-sociological studies rarely involved participant observation in data collection and non-linguistic studies rarely emphasised local interactions and verbal exchanges between participants. Studies in blue-collar settings are equally rare. Through a linguistic ethnographic approach, this research offers a detailed picture of the everyday experience of trainee cooks on work placement in professional kitchens.

Data was collected through participant observation, fieldnotes, interviews and audio-recordings over a 16-week period involving more than 550 hours in nine professional kitchens. Constituted by physical action, kitchen work involved extensive engagement in *doing* and for trainees in particular, *watching*. Doing involved engagement in assigned tasks and working in the capacity of specific workers at their stations, here described as 'doing Nellie's work'. Watching was mandated by workers, treated as a mode of learning and gave trainees a legitimate presence in the kitchens. A third action termed as *origination* was also uncovered in this context. Origination is a self-directed voluntary action of bringing about work, carrying it out and contributing purposefully to work situations. Constituted by physical actions and the general physicality of work, task performance involved verbal interactions that were often minimal. Occasions of extended talk however showed the construction of particular relationships. These extended interactions provided important learning opportunities.

The study supports, reinforces and extends findings in workplace research. It also makes a theoretical contribution through the concepts of origination and legitimate presence, and illustrates the use of a linguistic-ethnographic approach in a minimal talk context. Its outcomes are useful for understanding the nature of work/learning at work placement and offer practical insights of value to professionals involved in work preparation programmes.

1.1 Getting started

Whilst teaching at a vocational college, I had been intrigued by questions relating to the experience of students on work placement. It seemed to me that whilst college curriculum was fairly transparent and was regularly probed and reviewed to improve student learning, the work placement component was a 'black box' of sorts, inadequately examined for its implications on vocational education provision. I wanted to understand more about what went on during work placement and potentially contribute findings to enhance student learning, employability and the overall experience of vocational education.

Before going further, it will be useful to define the term 'vocational education' as the use of this term is by no means consistent and it tends to be deployed differently in different educational settings. The term has been used to cover a broad range of educational provision in universities, schools and workplaces. In this research, 'vocational education' refers to 'occupational education and training in a vocational college' (Billett 2011:2). It is known as vocational education and training (VET) in the UK and is provided through VET courses at Further Education (FE) colleges (Colley et al. 2003).

In VET, a central concern is the 'initial preparation of individuals for working life, including developing the capacities to practise their selected occupations' (Billett 2011:4). The educational purpose of VET is defined as 'identifying the knowledge required for effective performance in an occupation, organising experiences to capture that knowledge and then finding ways of enacting those experiences so that learners can come to be effective in the occupational practices' (Billett 2011:8). VET is intended to support the development of specific competences for occupations:

...the conferment of entitlements at the end of vocational training often refers to quite specific competences that enable the candidate to fulfil professional tasks. ... This is a particularity of all forms of vocational education, which aims at the acquisition of professional competence for the exercise of specific occupations. (Rauner and Maclean 2009:15)

Rauner and Maclean state that 'vocational education and training is characterised by the crucial importance of *learning in the work process*' (ibid., emphasis in original). In many formal vocational education systems, VET programmes involved theory lessons in the classroom and practical lessons in training facilities on campus as well as practical experience at work placement.

But whilst much is known about what goes on in classrooms and training facilities in the colleges, little is known about what went on at work placements. I was intrigued by and wanted to know more about the realities of work and learning as experienced by students on work placement.

1.2 Qualitative research in VET

Searching through the literature, I realised there was hardly any qualitative research on the experience of vocational students on work placement in my country. Published articles on vocational education in Singapore had two main foci: the sector's historical development and future prospects, and the related challenges. Early papers published in the 1980s and 1990s documented the historical development of VET (Law 1984a, Law 1984b), reviewed vocational training programmes (Law 1992) and described the institutional challenges faced by the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), the national provider of VET in Singapore (Law 1996). More recent papers published in the 2000s were concerned with the quality and performance management of VET colleges in relation to curriculum (Yek and Penney 2006), the use of technology (Yek and Pagram 2006), globalisation (Yek and Onselen 2005) and governance (Yek 2006).

Perhaps reflecting the priorities of the different periods, the earlier papers focused on the historical development and the role of vocational education in the country's overall economic development, and the later papers dealt with the issue of how quality and performance, having been achieved, could be sustained. These articles have provided important and valuable information, detailing the sector's evolution in the country's broader education landscape and the strategic management of vocational colleges to face future challenges. The approach taken in these articles has been from a macro-level institutional perspective. Arguably the realities of what goes on on the ground also bear reporting i.e. the experiences of students who are the ones for whom vocational education would have the most impact. Perhaps a corollary of the general lack of qualitative research in VET in my country, there is no qualitative study of student experiences to date.

The lack of qualitative research in VET is not unique to my country. The sector appears to receive more academic attention in the UK only recently (Elliott 1996; Hodkinson and James 2003). In 1996, Elliott rued the 'invisibility of research' within the further education sector in the UK and suggested that there were historical, structural and symbolic barriers that inhibited the expansion of research in this area. He noted that whilst there was an increasing volume of these studies at the time of his writing, more could be done to establish a stronger research culture which potentially held benefits for institutions and their managers (1996:108). Moreover teachers and students in the sector would benefit too. Anderson and his colleagues argue that using and doing research empowered professionals and gave them greater influence over policy and practice, adding that 'the development of classroom-based, evidence-led improvement will also raise the 'market value' of FE teachers and students' (2003:512).

But qualitative studies in vocational education continued to be under-represented. In 2010, Salisbury and Jephcote noted that there were studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s on

the socialisation processes in further education but ‘qualitative research by anthropologists and sociologists of education in the UK and USA have tended to concentrate on compulsory school sectors with post-compulsory sites of learning being largely ignored’. A result of this imbalance in research interest is our limited knowledge on the experiences of students (and teachers) in VET; ‘we know very little about what it is like to be a teacher or a student in the further education sector compared to experiences in other phases of education’ (Salisbury and Jephcote 2010:71).

Where qualitative studies of these experiences are concerned, Salisbury and Jephcote’s (2010) study joins only those carried out under the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (see James and Biesta 2007). The current study contributes to qualitative research on student experiences in VET.

1.3 Researching the experience of VET in Singapore

This research is based in the context of VET in my home country, Singapore. In this section, I discuss some of the reasons that make this context valuable and ripe for study.

VET in Singapore is widely regarded as successful in the eyes of the international community and insights from this context are potentially useful for discussions in other VET contexts. Writing in *Education Week*, the American publisher of news and information on higher education, Sean Cavanagh (2009) noted that in 2007, Singapore’s main vocational education provider ‘received an award for effective government from Harvard’s Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation which cited the school’s ability to help low academic achievers acquire skills and move into good-paying jobs’. In addition to successes in public relations branding, the writer described the VET system’s strong grounding in academic content that helped students in class and on the job as well as the sector’s focus and orientation to the needs and standards of local industries.

VET colleges in Singapore have collaborated with international vocational institutions in the exchange of VET expertise (ITE Annual Report 2010). They have hosted and shared best practices and innovative learning approaches with delegates from more than 23 countries including government ministers from Mongolia, Panama, Qatar, Sweden and Thailand, state senators and members of the House of Representatives from North Carolina in the USA, parliamentarians from Denmark as well as delegates from TAFE Directors (Australia) and the World Bank.

There is also huge government funding to sustain the success of the sector. Pledging the government's continued commitment to the vocational colleges in April 2011, the republic's prime minister announced that the 'Ministry of Education will spend \$2 billion on the [vocational colleges] over the next five years to keep it 'on the cutting edge' and 'prepare students for an exciting future' (*MyPaper*, 19 April 2011).

Recent developments in the VET sector in Singapore also suggest the time is ripe for further research in VET. These developments show government efforts in focusing attention on VET and arguably a study on the experiences of VET students is timely. In his speech on 8 November 2013 at the official opening ceremony of a vocational college, the republic's prime minister announced the launch of a government-led committee to 'strengthen applied pathways to enhance career and academic progression prospects for Polytechnic and ITE graduates' (Speech by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, <http://www.moe.gov.sg/aspire/index.php>, accessed on 30 June 2014).

Chaired by the Senior Minister of State for the Ministries of Law and Education, Ms Indranee Rajah, the ASPIRE Committee was formed to look at enhancing those prospects 'through the strengthening of industry linkages to provide work-relevant training for students, enhanced educational and career guidance, and pursuit of industrial research, innovation and enterprise activities that support the Polytechnics and ITE's academic

mission'. Aside from the steering committee, four sub-committees were created and tasked with recommending strategies to:

- Strengthen applied education pathways in partnership with industry
- Match students' strengths and interests to applied education pathways and opportunities, and examine supporting mechanisms to increase their chances of success
- Enhance collaboration between Polytechnics/ITE and industry in industrial research, innovation and enterprise (RIE) to raise the currency and effectiveness of teaching and learning, and allow the polytechnics and ITE to contribute more directly to industry and the knowledge economy through RIE activities that also support their academic mission

(<http://www.moe.gov.sg/aspire/index.php>, accessed on 30 June 2014)

The recommendations will be made based on consultations with industry practitioners, students, parents, academic staff and alumni. The review is expected to be completed by year-end 2014. Although this research is not intended as a contribution to ASPIRE's efforts, it has similarly identified the need to direct attention to VET research and responded to it.

1.4 Going forward

This research was prompted by my personal interest in the experiences of students in vocational courses and the lack of qualitative research in this area. Both in the Singapore context and UK generally, qualitative studies in VET have lagged behind those in other phases of education. This research is aimed at illuminating the student experience in vocational programmes, particularly their everyday experience during work placement.

A qualitative, ethnographic study of students on work placement would deepen understanding of the everyday realities of students as trainees learning to work at work.

Practical questions such as what exactly students did at work placement as well as how and what they learned could be raised and addressed. Insights on appropriate, acceptable and valued attitudes and behaviours could also be gleaned. This research is aimed at increasing these understandings.

In addition it contributes to existing studies on the student experience in vocational education by extending this area of research with a linguistic-ethnographic approach. It will be shown in the unfolding chapters that this provides a more comprehensive treatment of the data from the everyday world of the trainees.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. In Chapter 2, I discuss the formative literature that shaped this research. Five areas of research made up my background reading: studies on students in vocational programmes, professional socialisation studies, theories of workplace learning, studies demonstrating the discursive construction of identity and the work of sociologist Erving Goffman in his monograph, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959).

In Chapter 3 which describes the research methodology, I describe the research context and the research tradition in which this study is positioned, provide a detailed description of data collection methods and the process of data analysis, as well as engage with issues related to reliability, validity and ethics relevant to this research.

As an introduction to the world of work placement, Chapter 4 provides an overview of the context of the professional kitchens in which the vocational students qua trainee cooks worked. Chapters 5-7 form the backbone of the research and focus on the analysis of the trainees' experience during work placement. Chapter 5 describes the day-to-day experience of trainees with reference to the two most salient actions observed in their daily activity namely the actions of doing and watching. Chapter 6 explores a specific action

that combined *doing* and *watching*, and discusses its enactment in fitting oneself into work activities. In Chapter 7, the discussion turns to talk-as-action. It examines the place of talk in the kitchens, its affordances in terms of learning opportunities and participants' actions in building particular relationships in the kitchens.

Chapter 8 provides a discussion of the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions made by this research. The chapter also suggests implications that can be drawn from the findings and areas for further research. Finally, it addresses some limitations of the current study.

The concluding chapter, Chapter 9 wraps up the research with my personal reflections on the research experience.

This research aims to shed light on the experience of vocational students during their work placement. In this chapter, I discuss the formative literature that shaped the research. In Section 2.1, I discuss empirical studies which relate to the experience of students in vocational education. Much of this work tended to conceptualise vocational education as a process of occupational socialisation and as a function of social reproduction. These studies have produced rich insights but they offer a partial view of the student experience of vocational education i.e. the everyday experience of learning, working and interacting with others at college and during work placement. Salisbury and Jephcote's (2010) study represents a departure from the sociologically oriented focus in the earlier studies and offers a point of reference for the current study.

In Section 2.2, I review studies in applied linguistics on the professional socialisation of novices and suggest the gaps that are potentially filled by this research. In this group of studies, socialisation is conceived as individuals' (and groups') movement into new settings and into the practices found there. However there is little research on individuals joining non-academic, non-higher education workplaces.

As a fundamental assumption of work placement is that it afforded a practical learning experience through working, I reviewed research on workplace learning. Some of the more widely-known theories are described in Section 2.3.

In the analysis chapters, I describe salient forms of action that constitute trainees' everyday experience; within this group of actions is talk-as-action. The theoretical basis for talk-as-action is explored in Section 2.4 with reference to empirical studies showing the discursive construction of identity in talk.

Finally, in Section 2.5, I introduce key ideas from the sociologist Erving Goffman's (1959) work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, which have informed this research.

2.1 Vocational education

2.1.1 Socialisation

Much qualitative research on students in vocational education has converged on the experience as that of socialisation to particular occupations and social classes (e.g. Stafford 1981, Avis 1984, Cockburn 1987, Skeggs 1988, Frykholm and Nitzler 1993, Bates 1993, Riseborough 1993, Colley et al. 2003). Frykholm and Nitzler regard vocational and career teaching 'as part of both a general and specific socialisation to the various sectors and positions of working life', stating that:

...vocational teaching is characterised more by socialisation than by qualification, i.e. that it is more a question of transmitting disposition and attitudes than of giving the knowledge and skills required for specific tasks. (Frykholm and Nitzler 1993:434)

The writers report that similar content was delivered differently to students in four different courses and that the instructional discourse in each course enacted the transmission of particular dispositions and attitudes. This transmission was influenced by prevailing structures of thought in the sectors of employment and occupational levels to which students were being prepared (1993:441).

In the metalwork programme, unemployment was depicted as a problem to be resolved by the individual. To avoid it, students were urged to be 'active, conscientious, clean and proper, and to take jobs offered' (1993:438). According to the writers, the 'most important knowledge transmitted' in this course was 'adjustment, conformity and submission to superiors' (ibid.). In the nursing programme, work was depicted as 'an activity that should be carried out by people with an inner conviction that they were working for something

important and meaningful' and external working conditions such as working hours and wages were of minor importance (1993:440). Nursing students were expected to conform to a hierarchy, subscribe to a 'general moral and ethical system of rules' that tells them to 'feel empathy towards others' and 'be devoted to nursing' as well as to 'be contented and not assert their own interests, especially regarding wages' (1993:440). Through the classroom instructional discourse, students were being socialised to 'structures of thought specific for each programme' (1993:441).

Frykholm and Nitzler's study was based on the vocational programmes in a Swedish upper secondary school and the writers acknowledged that the socialising effects reported may be marginal given that vocational education was only 'a small part in the everyday lives of the students' in the upper secondary school that they studied (1993:442).

Bates (1993) reports further on the socialising function of vocational education in her study of 16- to 18-year-old vocational students training for jobs as care assistants in homes for the elderly. The writer describes the changes in students' attitudes towards a career in 'caring' over a period of nine months. In the course of their training, the students learnt to cope with stressful tasks and while they initially reacted with disgust and shock at the demands of their job, they eventually came to accept and became enthusiastic about their work. She also noted that none of the students had any interest in the job while at school but most of them had applied to join the 'caring' scheme by the time they left school. The writer suggests that the dramatic changes in the students' attitudes were due to changes in their self-definitions and approach to the job which she attributes to an 'emergent vocational identity' (1993:23). In her account of the student Kay's eventual acceptance of the occupational culture, she describes Kay as having adapted feelings of disgust and shame into feelings of pride regarding her work and coming to see the course as 'right for me' (ibid.).

Bates' study, conducted over an extended period, provides validity to the socialisation claims made in Frykholm and Nitzler's (1993) study. These studies join several others within the sociology of education that tended to apply the theory of social reproduction to vocational learning. According to Avis (1994), the beginning of this interest is marked by Gleeson and his colleagues' (1980) study of craft and technician education and training in a further education college. Since Gleeson et al.'s (1980) study, writers have linked vocational learning with social reproduction in a range of courses such as caring (Avis 1984, Skeggs 1988, Bates 1993), engineering (Colley et al. 2003), metalwork (Frykholm and Nitzler 1993), business studies (Riseborough 1993), fashion design (Bates 1990) and youth training (Stafford 1981, Cockburn 1987).

These studies have produced insights on social organisation through the provision of vocational education but arguably, they captured only one aspect of what it meant to be a student in vocational education. Essentially, the focus was on the outcomes of vocational education (i.e. socialisation to particular dispositions and social classes). The process of vocational education, specifically the student experience of it, is a topic that remains to be explored more fully.

Researching the latter topic is further compelled by the fact that there is little in these studies that account for the individual and their role at the centre of it all. In over-privileging the social structure with a focus on 'macro' constraints (Attwood et al. 2003:80), these studies tended to downplay individual agency in the learning process i.e. the micro level autonomy and control individuals have over events and their actions. As Avis (1994) has argued, the uni-directional and smooth socialisation process assumed in these sociological studies is not in fact unproblematic. Furthermore workplace studies have repeatedly shown that individual agency played a prominent role in work-related learning (Billett and Smith 2006, Billett 2001, Lyngsnes and Rismark 2011, Brockmann 2010). These

latter studies raise questions on whether the agency of the individual should be left unexamined in studies relating to the experience of vocational education.

Research two decades later has placed greater emphasis on students themselves i.e. their individual agency but continues to hark back to the socialising function of vocational education. Colley and her colleagues' (2003) study takes the relationship between individual identity and learning as the starting point. Their data was drawn from a large-scale UK project, Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education, which was within the Economic and Social Research Council's Teaching and Learning Research Programme (Hodkinson and James (2003) provide a detailed overview of the project and James and Biesta (2007) contains fuller accounts of the data and analysis). The four-year longitudinal study covered 19 learning sites in four further education colleges (James and Biesta 2007:14). In Colley and her colleagues' (2003) study, the writers focus on case studies of childcare, health studies and electronic and telecommunications engineering courses.

Working with data from semi-structured interviews with students and tutors, a questionnaire, observations of the college sites and research journals kept by tutors, the writers argue that 'a central aspect of students' learning appears to be a process of orientation to a particular identity, a sense of what makes "the right person for the job"' (2003:488). They note that personal attributes such as gentleness, enthusiasm, cheerfulness, warmth and empathy were promoted in the childcare and nursing courses where tutors explicitly encouraged these attributes and fostered their development through assessment (ibid.). In student accounts of the learning experience in the engineering course, the writers found that particular modes of thinking such as logical thinking, technological inventiveness and objective judgement were privileged (ibid.). Vocational education entailed 'becoming' the right person for the job by orienting to discipline-specific dispositions.

But the individual is not merely a passive subject. With their proposed notion of a vocational habitus, the writers describe the socialisation process as involving more than passive role adjustment. The 'vocational habitus' proposes that:

the learner aspires to a certain combination of dispositions demanded by the vocational culture. It operates in disciplinary ways to dictate how one should properly feel, look and act as well as the values, attitudes and beliefs that one should espouse. (2003:488)

However it was 'not unitary or essentialising' (2003:489) and it involved the agency of the individual:

the vocational habitus – and the wider vocational culture – is relational and dynamic, co-constructed partly by the dispositions of the students themselves as they construct their own identities. (2003:488)

The writers explain that although students must have certain predispositions, 'much identity-work remains to be done' (ibid.) as the vocational habitus 'contains important contradictory tensions, which the learner must negotiate' (2003:489). This identity-work (or a 'transformation of habitus', ibid.) includes the ability to accept the 'disappointments, difficulties and privations of entering the field, and to reconstruct them more positively over time' (ibid.). The tensions lie in putting into practice elements of the idealised habitus. Learners are presented with an 'idealised habitus' constituting the image of the 'right person for the job' to which they should aspire but in practice, this was 'unrealisable' and they orientate to a 'realised habitus' which may contain elements antithetical to the idealised habitus but which enabled them to perform their jobs. Doing the identity-work necessitated by the process of orientation to the vocational habitus involved agency.

In contrast to earlier studies on students in vocational education which have largely ignored the individual in the education process, Colley and her colleagues' study makes room for the role of the individual in their account of the identity-work students engaged in as they orientated to the vocational habitus. Students were active agents in 'becoming the

right person for the job'. Moreover although the writers did not mention this, it seems to me that in doing so, these students were also active agents in 'making the job right for themselves' as they found ways to manage their work instead of caving under the physical, emotional or other demands of the job.

But while the focus on the relationship between identity and learning in their study appears to shift away from the limited view of vocational education as socialisation to a pre-determined occupational identity and specific social class, this shift appears a matter of degree rather than perspective. The notion that students orientated to a particular identity in a process of making themselves the right person for the job suggests socialisation to particular occupational identities. Furthermore, the notion that certain predispositions were necessary and that the source of these predispositions lay in particular social classes (2003:488) alludes to social reproduction theory. As mentioned earlier, the rich insights offered by the socialisation perspective and the substantial body of this research notwithstanding, there remains more that can be known about students in vocational education other than only the socialising outcomes of their education.

The current study extends research on students in vocational education. Most of the existing qualitative studies oriented to the outcomes of vocational education and the notion of socialisation. The current study orients to the *process* of vocational education and seeks to understand the everyday experience of vocational students. In focusing on the process rather than the outcomes, it offers another view that potentially deepens understanding of 'the same object' when seen from an alternative perspective, as Blommaert has pointed out in his rationalisation of the proposal for superdiversity:

What is truly new, therefore, is the perspective and not the objects. It is the perspective that enables us not just to analyse the messy contemporary stuff, but also to re-analyze and re-interpret more conventional and older data, now questioning the fundamental assumptions previously used in analysis. (Blommaert 2013)

Blommaert's point about taking a new perspective on previously studied objects and the possibility this might afford of deeper understanding is relevant to this research, given that the current study differs in the approach that has been taken in a substantial number of studies on students in vocational education. This research responds to the benefits and challenges that a new perspective might provide by orienting not to the outcomes but to the process of vocational education. It focuses in particular on a specific component of that process, namely the everyday experience of students on work placement.

The current study also does not rely on the socialisation theory prevalent in previous studies. The theme of socialisation has been persistent in this area of research but prior to data analysis I resisted the pull to tie vocational learning to its purported occupational and class-based socialising functions and instead followed the analysis. The theme of socialisation did not emerge prominently enough from this to warrant its discussion. While it is tempting to rely on the available theory, it seemed to me then as it does now that it must be resisted so that the data is allowed to speak for itself and new insights can emerge.

In this, I am guided by the method of anthropological ethnographers:

They see data as containing their own patterns, their own concepts, and they view analysis as a long-term effort to figure out what those concepts might be. Maybe the results do map onto some available theory; but if they don't, so much the better. The new concepts bring you closer to the world of the people you worked with than available theoretical concepts could ever have. (Agar 2008:40)

Moreover the conceptualisation of identity and socialisation to a particular fixed and singular identity can arguably be questioned. In the earlier studies, identity appears to be 'private, pre-discursive and stable' (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:3). Students internalised a new vocational identity based on dispositions one must cultivate and learning was a process of 'identity transformation' i.e. 'becoming' the 'right person for the job'. In Colley and her colleagues' (2003) study, the identity-work involved students modifying their

existing habitus as they orientate to the vocational habitus, resulting in the transformation of identity to one required for performing their jobs.

But this raises the question of there being a singular, static identity (to which individuals were conforming) or whether there were multiple identities at play in different situations, and whether identities were in fact transformed or did students merely interpret expectations of them and presented themselves as such.

The notion of a dominant, singular and static occupational identity to which students are socialised is thrown into question by Fine (1996a). In his ethnographic study of the occupational identity(ies) of cooks carried out in the workplace, Fine argued against the traditional occupational-identity perspective which sees identity as a singular static whole and ignores the relationship between work and an individual's self-definition:

Typically occupational identity is seen as a closely linked set of images that connects one to an unambiguous work world. While other self-schemas may apply to other spheres of life, a dominant schema organises how one places oneself in light of a single set of occupational standards. Such a perspective does not do justice to the diversities of work and its interpretations. (Fine 1996a:92)

The writer showed how cooks defined their work and themselves as a result of work-related tasks. Workers had 'images of work roles [that] were mutable and divisible' and 'part of a repertoire of meanings that are used to make sense of who one is' (1996a:93). These images construct identities that were fluid across work activities and situated in ongoing tasks:

Varying images of work may be presented on different occasions to exemplify a "situated identity". These rhetorics are not depictions of a single work reality but represent articulation work that is done to construct meaning linked to a worker's sense of self. (ibid.)

Thus:

The assumption of a dominant identity overly limits people's choices in constructing their work relations. Tasks are socially situated and organisationally

determined and gain their meaning, and hence their connection to identities, according to the conditions of work and the motivations of workers. (ibid.)

Providing examples from the occupational rhetoric of cooks, Fine showed that cooks drew on images of professionals, artists, businessmen and manual labourers, and that these constructions were closely related to the conditions of the cooks' work. For example, cooks identified themselves as professionals with analogies about long years of training, use of systematic methods and likening their careful slicing of something to the surgeon's cut during surgery, as well as on occasions when their subcultural knowledge and expertise became salient such as cooking without relying on recipes and approximating amounts, and having autonomy in making decisions. On the other hand, they saw themselves as manual labourers on tasks where physical labour is emphasised such as 'chopping, cutting, running and carrying' (1996a:109), when carrying out mentally undemanding and repetitive tasks, when they were being supervised and if they did not have autonomy in decision-making.

Fine's study shows how workers drew on different images of their work roles to define themselves and derive meaning in their work. These self-definitions were influenced by the tasks workers engaged in and which in turn affected how they approached their work. The images they formed of their work and its particular characteristics created a composite occupational identity; a 'bricolage of identity work' is involved rather than a single occupational identity:

Workers depend on images of their work and its characteristics to create occupational identity. These images are simultaneously public, subcultural and personal. These images are not eternal, however, nor are they fully defining. In practice, workers use images and typifications when and if they seem appropriate: the bricolage of identity work. (Fine 1996a:112)

Fine's findings from the workplace itself and which were based on local, contingent interactions and observation are markedly different from those reported from college sites and elicited through ethnographic interviews in previous studies. Instead of the traditional

occupational-identity perspective and the notion of a dominant schema of attributes built from a set of occupational standards, Fine demonstrated that the construction of occupational identity was socially, temporally and spatially situated. Rather than the notion of a vocational habitus proposed in Colley and her colleagues' study and a vocational identity suggested in other sociological studies, Fine's study showed that local contingencies in the workplace constructed different identities i.e. work identities were constructed in relation to the tasks at hand and in relation to the people with whom one worked. These findings not only raise questions about there being any particular vocational identity, they also make it awkward to speak of socialisation to an occupational identity if the latter were not ultimately an entity with relatively stable and specific features (e.g. behaviours and attitudes) that one could be 'trained' to possess and display.

While earlier sociological studies provided insights, they focused mainly on the outcomes of vocational education, tying it to socialisation to particular occupational identities and social classes and neglecting the role of individual agency. Colley and her colleagues' study expands on the role of the individual. However, their theorisation of vocational learning as a process of individuals' socialisation to becoming right for the job and the concept of vocational habitus with inherent gender- and class-based predispositions harks back to previous socialisation studies. Together, these studies offer only a partial view of the student experience of vocational education by centring on the socialising outcomes of this form of education provision.

Moreover these studies paid little attention to the goings-on at the workplace, an important component in vocational education. When workplace processes and contingent interactions are taken into account, the conceptualisation of identity as singular, static and undergoing transformation, or socialisation, to a vocational habitus becomes problematic. As Fine showed, occupational identity is a social construction and not pre-determined; it

was also a composite of identities related to the tasks in which workers engaged. His study also suggests the purchase of an ethnographic approach combining insights from participant observation and contingent interactions at the workplace in shedding new light on previous findings.

Instead of focusing on the socialisation outcome of vocational education, pre-supposing an a priori occupational identity and taking for granted the interactions involved in the workplace, this research explores the *process* of vocational education, in particular the work placement component of that process. Its aim is to shed light on the everyday experience of vocational students as they worked during work placement. It adopts an ethnographic approach and takes into account contingent interactions in the workplace.

2.1.2 Everyday experience

A study that has oriented to the daily experiences of students in vocational education is in Salisbury and Jephcote (2010). Salisbury and Jephcote note the under-representation of qualitative research in vocational education in the UK and USA and their review of the vocational learning literature led them to the same studies I cited above. The writers report that their two-year ESRC-funded research project provided the only detailed ethnographic investigation of further education sites in Wales and the UK generally (2010:80).

In contrast to previous studies that had a socialisation focus, Salisbury and Jephcote's research focused 'on the ways in which learning outcomes were a product of the social interaction of students and teachers' (2010:72). In addition to interviews, documents, and teacher and student learning journals, data was collected through 'first-hand ethnographic observation of teaching and learning' in which 'the full-time ethnographer followed the activities of the core students and teachers observing and capturing in field notes and expanded accounts their day to day work' (ibid.). The writers described the 'learning

journeys' of the students and teachers in the Animal Care programme over a two-year period. They provide a thick description of 'what it means to be a participant in further education' and also argue that college-based learning was closely related to work-based learning (2010:71).

The current study is similar to Salisbury and Jephcote's study in its aim to describe the everyday experience of students in vocational education and it also adopts an ethnographic approach in data collection. However, it differs from their study in the site selected for exploration. Salisbury and Jephcote's study was carried out in college classrooms and training facilities e.g. Animal Care departments, Equine Studies centres and college farms. The current study explores the experience of vocational students on work placement.

Studies that focus on vocational students on work placement and which collect and analyse data based on participant observation and fieldnotes are rare. In the studies mentioned in this section, data had been gathered at college sites rather than work placement sites (e.g. Colley et al. 2003, Salisbury and Jephcote 2010). In many studies, whilst data was reported to have been collected through participant observation, the analysis relied on ethnographic interviews (e.g. Bates 1993, Riseborough 1993). The current study focuses on the day-to-day experience of vocational students on work placement, and it collects and analyses data based on participant observation and fieldnotes.

2.2 Professional socialisation

Within applied linguistics, the field of language socialisation has produced much research on the professional socialisation of novices to their respective areas of work. Formulated in the early 1980s and originally dedicated to research on adult-child and child-child communication (Ochs 2002:106), language socialisation 'has as its goal the understanding of how persons become competent members of social groups and the role of language in

this process' (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986:167). This process is an interactive, 'collaborative enterprise' (Ochs 2000:230) and the analytic focus rests on 'socially and culturally organised interactions that conjoin less and more experienced persons in the structuring of knowledge, emotion and social action' (ibid.). While early research in language socialisation focused on small-scale societies (Ochs and Schieffelin 1984, Schieffelin and Ochs 1986), language socialisation studies reviewed two decades later included a diverse range of sociolinguistic and culturally heterogeneous settings and institutional environments as well as studies on socialisation later in the life cycle (Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez 2002:341).

An area of language socialisation studies concerns the professional socialisation of novices. These studies are concerned with 'individuals' and groups' movement into new educational, vocational, professional and other settings, and into the cultures, language and literacy practices, identities and stances instilled there' (Duff 2008:257). They take into account the demands of workplace linguistic and cultural practices, and are oriented to the preparation of students to meet these demands in the course of their education and working lives.

Much of this work has been carried out in higher education settings and the workplaces of graduates from the related programmes. Philips (1982) shows how law students are socialised to specialised legal vocabulary. In the classroom, the acquisition of legal language is facilitated by verbal interactions between students and teachers that closely mirrored judge-lawyer interactions in the courtroom. Students learned to prepare and present 'briefs' using legal language as well as deal with interruptions and extended questioning sequences from their teachers as they would as lawyers in court.

In a similar setting, Mertz (1996) describes the socialisation of law students in classroom discourse as they learned to render a legal 'reading' to cases. In her analysis of a verbal exchange between a law student and her professor, the writer shows how classroom discourse was structured by the professor to train the student in seeing things a particular

way. In both Philips' (1982) and Mertz's (1996) studies, students were socialised to specific registers through verbal interactions with their tutors.

Erickson's (1999) study highlights how novices effectively employed linguistic resources in presenting themselves as professionally competent. In the workplace setting of a hospital, the writer analyses how a medical intern positioned himself as a fellow physician and presented himself as medically competent in a case presentation to his preceptor (a clinically experienced attending physician). The writer notes that while interns had learnt in medical school to put together and present a case descriptively, they had to, during residency, present it rhetorically in a way that 'makes themselves look professionally competent' (1999:136). In his analysis, the writer showed that the intern's use of the informal style and ellipsis, and the denigration of a patient's medical condition as medically uninteresting and unsatisfying to a physician served to show the intern's clinical competence and collegial status with the preceptor. The finding that the talk of the intern as a doctor matched that of the preceptor suggests that the intern could be seen as practising being in the role of a 'real doctor' (1999:138).

Although there exists a body of professional socialisation studies in higher-education disciplines including law as we saw above (Philips 1982; Mertz 1996, 1998), physics (Jacoby 1998) and engineering (Vickers 2007), there are few studies of this nature in non-academic, non-higher education disciplines. Studies such as Jacobs-Huey's (1999) on the professional socialisation of hair stylists in a private college are rare.

Reflecting the situation in higher education, professional socialisation studies in the workplace are mostly based in the future white-collar work settings of higher education graduates e.g. Erickson (1999) as we saw above, Hobbs (2004), Pettinari (1988), Hunter (1991), Atkinson (1995) and Cicourel (1999) in medicine; and Arakelian (2009), Parks and

Maguire (1999), and Parks (2001) in nursing. There are few studies on the professional socialisation of novices in blue-collar workplaces.

Lamenting on the 'rather meagre trickle of workplace and professional socialisation research', Roberts (2010:213) suggests that the nature of professional socialisation studies (ethnographic, holistic, longitudinal and based on naturally occurring data), the need to provide evidence of learning and the challenges in gaining access to workplaces are the reasons for the lack of relevant research in the workplace.

Responding to Duff's (2008:268) call for 'a wider cross-section of contexts, discourses/genres, and disciplines or vocations into which individuals and groups are socialised', the current study deviates from the well-represented research in higher education disciplines and white-collar settings. It contributes to professional socialisation research by focusing on the professional development of trainees in a trade career, thus joining Jacobs-Huey's (1999) study as the handful of studies on students training for non-academic, non-higher education professions. It adds to the workplaces studied by carrying out this research in the under-explored blue-collar workplace specifically, the professional kitchen.

Most studies in professional socialisation have focused on language socialisation and the use of linguistic data as the primary source of insight. This research extends the field by taking as its starting point the overall experience of work and examines the linguistic data as a function of that experience. Professional socialisation is regarded as encompassing various aspects of workplace life, including but not limited to talk which is but 'only one aspect of workplace life' (Sarangi and Roberts 1999:23). Instead of focusing primarily and exclusively on talk, this research seeks first to understand the context of the work placement i.e. the professional kitchen and its work practices before delineating the role of

linguistic data in the setting. Arguably, this provides a more holistic and nuanced depiction of professional socialisation in the workplace studied in this research.

2.3 Workplace learning

Although professional socialisation studies in workplaces are under-represented, Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) have made influential contributions in their theorisation of learning and the socialisation of novices in communities of practice. Basing their theory on participation in social practice as the fundamental form of learning (1991:54), the writers propose the concept of legitimate peripheral participation as ‘a descriptor of engagement in social practice that entails learning as an integral constituent’ (1991:35). The concept highlights learners as inevitable participants in communities of practitioners and who acquire mastery of knowledge and skill in their progression toward full participation in the practices of the community (1991:29).

Several writers have pointed out limitations in Lave and Wenger’s theorisation. Bathmaker and Avis (2005) highlight issues about applying the communities of practice model to the present-day unpredictable and rapidly changing work climate. Their study focuses on trainee lecturers on a teaching placement at a further education college. The writers note that the impact of changes in further education in the UK had led to existing communities of practice being unmotivated, burnt out and lacking commitment to students. In the face of these conditions, rather than receiving encouragement to participate more fully in the existing communities of practice, trainee lecturers experienced difficulties with access and were further alienated by the cultures in these communities.

Fuller and her colleagues (2005) argue that the complex settings in contemporary workplaces and institutional environments play an important role in the configuration of opportunities and barriers to learning, and show that patterns and forms of participation

are more diverse than theorised in the concepts of legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice. The limitations of the model of learning in Wenger's (1998) expanded monograph on communities of practice led Olesen (2006) to comment that: 'In fact, Wenger's conception can be questioned as to whether it provides a theory of learning at all, or even a relevant account of (or parts of) the social context in which learning may take place' (2006:56).

Lave and Wenger's theorisation of learning offers a perspective on learning as situated and social in character, thus debunking the notion of learning as internalised within the mind which the writers argue was problematic (Lave and Wenger 1991:47-49). However there are assumptions in their studies of five apprenticeships that seem to be important in their theorisation but were not adequately addressed in their account. Coupled with the differences between their observations in the apprenticeship studies and mine in the placement kitchens, their account offers little purchase for my purposes.

Unlike the largely benign and welcoming communities of practice in Lave and Wenger's apprenticeship studies, the community of practice in the professional kitchen seemed ambivalent to the trainees and was as welcoming as it was not. Access to practice appeared to vary with work situations, workers and trainees, and the issue of access seemed hardly straightforward. Indeed Fuller and Unwin (2003) showed some of the complexity involved in their characterisation of workplace learning environments on a continuum between 'expansive' and 'restrictive' according to the extent to which they offered apprentices access to communities of practice.

But in Lave and Wenger's theorisation of learning there is little account of the complexities involved in access. The writers state that having access to practice was important for legitimate peripheral participation:

The *key* to legitimate peripherality is access by newcomers to the community of practice and all that membership entails. To become a full member of the community of practice requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity, old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources and to opportunities for participation. The issue is so central to membership that, in a sense, all that we have said so far is about access. (Lave and Wenger 1991:100-101, emphasis mine)

To be able to participate in a legitimately peripheral way entails that newcomers have broad access to arenas of mature practice. (Lave and Wenger 1991:110)

Yet the issue of access did not appear to be adequately treated. The writers acknowledged that there were problems with access which the apprenticeship studies they cited have 'on the whole [been] silent' (1991:86). Arguably if access is 'key' to legitimate peripherality and hence in becoming a full member of the community of practice, it seems important to address its related issues e.g. organising access, problems with access, the implications for access and for the learner of less-welcoming communities of practice etc.

The writers go on to discuss structural factors regarding access: the need for 'transparency' in the 'technology of practice', the possibilities of 'sequestration' and the fact that access is liable to manipulation (1991:100-105) but this discussion nonetheless fails to address the problem of access and their account of learning thus threatens to leave learners out of the theory. Olesen (2006) makes a similar point in critiquing the lack of 'useful answers' to learner-oriented questions such as learners' negotiation of identities in communities of practice in Wenger (1998) and argues that: 'To create a theory of learning requires theorizing the learner as a subject in its own right, and of the processes that s/he is undergoing' (2006:56).

Moreover there is a fundamental difference in the way learning and working is organised in Lave and Wenger's (1991) apprenticeship studies and in the placement kitchens in this research. The writers state that:

Apprenticeship learning is not “work-driven” in the way stereotypes of informal learning have suggested; the ordering of learning and of everyday practice do not coincide. Production activity-segments must be learned in different sequences than those in which a production process unfolds, if peripheral, less intense, less complex, less vital tasks are learned before more central aspects of practice. (Lave and Wenger 1991:96)

In the placement kitchens, learning was almost invariably ‘work-driven’. Learning and everyday practice coincided and were inextricable; learning was part of everyday practice and trainees learned through working as a regular worker. They carried out the tasks required of kitchen workers. These tasks were not simple, piecemeal tasks broken down for the benefit of the novice; trainees did not necessarily start with simpler tasks and progressed to more challenging ones, thus learning ‘in different sequences than those in which a production process unfolds ...’, as the quote above suggests. These tasks were tasks that kitchen workers themselves had to do right then had they not assigned them to the trainees. When tasks were more complex and trainees struggled with them, workers stepped in to provide further instruction.

The situation of learning and working in the placement kitchens is distinctly dissimilar from that described in Lave and Wenger’s account. Perhaps the difference had something to do with the different learning/working schemes: Lave and Wenger’s ‘apprentices’ and particular arrangements in these apprenticeship schemes and my ‘trainees’ who did not work under similar conditions. Nevertheless the point remains that the organisation of learning and working in the placement kitchens which is fundamental to trainee experience bears little resemblance to that in the account given in Lave and Wenger’s theory.

Michael Eraut and Stephen Billett have extensively theorised and empirically studied workplace learning. Eraut’s approach prioritises cognitive dimensions. In Eraut (2004), the writer compiles data from several research projects focused on the workplace learning of professionals, technicians and managers and addresses the questions of what was being

learned, how it was learned and the factors that affected the level and directions of learning effort (Eraut 2004:248). A typology of the knowledges, skills and competences learned at the workplace was developed (2004:265). The writer identified four main types of work activity that regularly gave rise to learning: participation in work activities, working alongside others, tackling challenging tasks and working with clients (2004:267), and the learning activities embedded within those processes include:

formal study, listening, observing, reflecting, practising and refining skills, trial and error, supervision or coaching, mentoring, problem solving, learning from mistakes, getting information and asking questions, being proactive and giving and receiving feedback. (ibid.)

Billett takes a sociocultural constructivist perspective in his approach. The writer conceptualises workplace learning as 'co-participation' between workplace resources and individual activity. The concept of co-participation refers to:

the reciprocal process of how the workplace affords participation and how individuals elect to engage with and participate in work activities and interactions, and learn co-constructively through them. (Billett 2004:191)

The workplace affords participation through its invitational qualities, 'that is, the kinds of activities and guidance individuals are able to access and elect to engage in' (ibid.). These activities include those that 'take place in the workplace ('what we do here is...') and how they are undertaken ('how we do things here is...')' (Billett 1999:155). Activities may be routine or non-routine with each type having consequences for what individuals came to know through their participation (Billett 2004:198). Thus:

The more non-routine the activity, the more likely it will lead to new learning. More routine activities will provide learning through reinforcement that strengthen the organisation of existing knowledge and enhances the confidence with means of proceeding with tasks. (Billett 2000:3)

Workplace affordances also include having access to guidance. Guidance may be direct or indirect. Direct guidance is provided by experts and other workers (Billett 1999:156) who

provide 'guidance in the form of questioning, direct instruction and making knowledge accessible' and who 'models and coaches workplace procedures and then monitors the progress of the learner' (Billett 1999:161). Indirect guidance includes 'observing and listening to other workers' (Billett 1999:156) and resources in the workplace environment that provide 'clues, cues and models that assist individuals' thinking and acting and hence their learning and understanding' (Billett 2000:1).

Although workplace affordances were important, Billett stresses that they were not sufficient to shape learning. Much also depended on the individual learners:

[Participation at work], and therefore learning, is also mediated by the degree to which the individual construes what is being afforded as invitational. This shapes how they engaged in the workplace activities and interactions from which they learn. (Billett 2004:191)

For Billett, individuals were agentic and their agency shaped how they participated and engaged in activities as well as responded to guidance. He writes that:

Meaning and practices arising from the social world require interpreting and construing. Yet, even beyond simply attending to, engaging with and comprehending what is being suggested, importantly individuals also bring possibly unique bases of conceptions, procedures and values to their engagement with social forms and practices. (Billett 2007:190)

Billett's conceptualisation explicitly places emphasis on individual agency, instead of participation alone, as central to learning. As he argues, 'participation in work activities does not lead to the unquestioned learning of what is afforded by the workplace. Individuals are active agents in what and how they learn from these encounters' (2001:211).

To varying degrees, it is generally accepted in these theories of workplace learning that participation in work activities was needed for learning. As mentioned, Eraut (2004) also provided concrete details of the 'learning activities' involved, such as observing, asking questions, learning from mistakes, supervision and coaching, and being pro-active. Implicit

in these activities was seeking guidance from workers (e.g. asking questions) and individual engagement through agentic actions (e.g. being pro-active).

Participation, seeking guidance and individual engagement were similar themes in Billett's conceptualisation of workplace learning which he summarises in the concept of co-participation. In addition to participation, direct and indirect guidance were forms of workplace affordances that influenced what individuals learned. Significantly, Billett emphasises individual agency and engagement as important factors that shaped learning: individuals drew on unique personal histories and values, and decided as active agents the nature of their engagement in work activities and guidance.

Although their studies have been conducted with adult learners/workers, Eraut's (2004) and Billett's (2007, 2004, 2001, 2000, 1999) research into workplace learning have provided useful points of reference in my study on the learning/working experience of trainees in the professional kitchens. Their findings and observations including participation in work activities, guidance from workers and individual agency described in their extensive work resonate with my data from the placement kitchens.

2.4 Talk as action

The discursive construction of identity has been widely studied in applied linguistics (e.g. Mean 2001, Coates, 1996, Bucholtz, Liang and Sutton 1999, Collins 2005, Cameron and Kulick 2003, Duff 2002, Hall et al. 1999, Benwell and Stokoe 2006).

In business meetings at the workplace, Holmes and her colleagues (1999) demonstrate the discursive construction of the professional identity of a manager. Senior staff enacted their authority status through speech acts such as setting the agenda, summarising progress, closing interactions and expressing approval, and the use of discourse strategies such as emphatic rhetorical devices and the control of turn-taking and topic-management which

function to express power and influence. In a more unpredictable situation, Farrell (2000) shows how employees at the interface of traditional workplace discourses and globalising 'Quality' discourses negotiate new 'working' identities in talk.

Hall and his colleagues (1999) showed professional identity constructed through the differentiation of institutional roles between participants and how that role differentiation is enacted through discursive means. A striking example of the social worker's construction of professional identity is provided in the latter's response to the client's suggestion of 'outside help' (1999:301) which was perceived by the latter as a challenge to her professional role since she was meant to provide the help the client needed. Evidently, the social worker's picture of her professional self was different from the client's, reminding us about what is involved in the social construction of the self: 'the individual must rely on others to complete the picture of him of which he himself is allowed to paint only certain parts' (Goffman 1956:493). The social worker attempts to paint more parts of this picture and construct her role as legitimate and her client as the object of social work intervention. She establishes her role as the legitimate help needed by the client by clarifying the latter's needs and volunteering to talk to the children. She also appeals to her experience with children in similar situations, emphasises her familiarity and regular contact with the children and promises to clarify the situation with them (1999:302).

In professional socialisation studies, writers have showed the construction of professional identity by novices in and through talk. In Erickson (1999) mentioned in the earlier section, the writer showed a medical intern constructing professional identity through using technical language and formal/informal registers in interactions with his preceptor. In a rather different setting, Jacobs-Huey (1999) demonstrated the acquisition of a 'professional voice' by students at a cosmetology institute as they trained to become professional hair stylists. In the specific 'discourse events/activities through which students were socialised

to and through language (1999:28) i.e. role-play, hair care narratives, 'master' narrative/textbooks, hair theory exams, client-student stylist negotiations and student interviews with salon owners, the student hair stylists were shown to acquire a professional voice through co-constructing with their teachers theories about professional language skills in hair theory classes, developing this voice in client-stylist interactions and engaging with the ideological and discursive construction of their expert identities as 'hair doctors'.

Underlying the conception of identity in the above studies is the notion of a social construction of the self through discourse i.e. the idea that 'identity is actively, ongoingly, dynamically constituted in discourse' (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:3). Widdicombe and Wooffitt put it succinctly:

Identity is not seen as a thing that we are, a property of individuals, but as something we do. It is a practical accomplishment, achieved and maintained through the detail of language use. (Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995:133)

Following the examples in these studies, this research also takes the view of 'identity as a verb' (Roberts and Sarangi 1999:229) and of its construction through actions in talk. It studies the constructed identities in localised interactions between trainee cooks and workers.

Although talk, in getting things done i.e. constructing identities, is treated as a form of action, it is one among a group of salient actions observed and it does not occupy a privileged position in this research. Unlike most studies in applied linguistic research which are based in contexts that are rich in linguistic data and which treat verbal and textual discourse as primary data sources, the current study is set in the action-oriented, rather than language-based, context of the professional kitchen.

In this context, physical action rather than verbal discourse dominated work activities. To avoid as far as possible a distorted representation of the work setting, the work activities in them and the trainee experience of this workplace which this research set out to describe, the analysis of the interactions was embedded in and regulated by the overarching ethnographic endeavour (Hak 1999:448). Thus, instead of extracting the available linguistic data (i.e. talk data) and basing the analysis wholly on that, which would have constituted only one aspect of the overall work experience of trainee cooks, this research has relied on the ethnographic data from participant observation and fieldnotes as its starting point and as the basis for the analysis of linguistic data. In other words, the discursive construction of identities is situated within the larger analysis of the trainee experience of work placement.

2.5 Drawing on Goffman

This research has undoubtedly been influenced by my reading of the work of the sociologist Erving Goffman in his monograph, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. In this final section in a chapter that has described the formative literature in the current study, I introduce several key ideas from Goffman's monograph that I have drawn on.

2.5.1 The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1959) offers a sociological perspective on how social life can be studied. He describes the perspective as a 'theatrical performance' and the principles as dramaturgical (1959:9).

Goffman draws his material from a range of occupations including interns, doctors and attendants at hospitals, seamen, chimney sweeps and the junk business, his own fieldwork in the Shetland Islands as well as novels and memoirs. With observations from this material, he describes how individuals in ordinary work situations present themselves and their

activity to others, how they guide and control the impressions formed of them and what they may or may not do while sustaining their performance before others (ibid.).

Goffman observes that in a social encounter, people commonly seek to acquire information about their interactants or to bring into play information they already know about them (1959:13). This is done for practical reasons: such information helps to define the situation and inform the interactants about what to expect and what will be expected of them (ibid.). For the individual, 'it will be in his interests to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him' (1959:15-16) and this control comes from shaping the definition of the situation and giving an impression of oneself that would be in one's interests to convey. The individual performs as a 'character' (1959:244) in the presence of others who are 'the audience, observers or co-participants' (1959:27). The 'performance' by the individual refers to all the activity of an individual before his audience and which has some influence on them (1959:32).

To convince the audience, the individual may attempt 'dramatic realisation' (1959:40), that is to 'dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure' (1959:40). Some types of work may not be sufficiently 'dramatic' to give the impression of an individual being engaged in work. In Goffman's example, the work activities of surgical and medical nursing staff were described to contrast the different extent of dramatisation in their respective work activities: while the former's work for post-operative patients is highly dramatised (changing bandages, swinging orthopaedic frames into place) so that to the audience the nurses are seen to engage in purposeful activities, the latter's invisible work of observing the shallowness of breathing, and the colour and tone of skin of patients as they stopped by patients' beds for a chat gave the impression that they were 'not very impressive' and even 'wasting time' (1959:41). Food establishments dramatised the work involved by taking pains with the menu description

and food presentation, and charging high prices for their food which are its visible products because the other aspects of operating the business are not readily dramatised such as the work of cooks in the kitchen.

In expressing ideal standards of the performance, the individual necessarily foregoes or conceals action which is inconsistent with those standards (1959:50). An aspect of concealment involves errors and mistakes which must be corrected before the performance and the telltale signs of such correction concealed so that 'an impression of infallibility, so important in many presentations, is maintained' (1959:52).

Individuals also attempt to give the impression that they are fit for the role in which they are performing by showing that they have ideal qualifications for the role (1959:54). Goffman observes that these ideal impressions were reinforced by a 'rhetoric of training' which fosters the impression that the licensed practitioner, by virtue of his learning experience, is now set apart from other men (1959:55). Bourdieu observes that qualifications '[confer] on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value' (1986:248) and '[institute] an essential difference between the officially recognised, guaranteed competence and simple cultural capital, which is constantly required to prove itself' (ibid.). In short, qualifications 'impose recognition' (ibid.). In certain cases though, the recognition imposed by formal qualifications may carry limited cachet for affirming a performer for the role. In the professional kitchen, it is sometimes felt that formal education provided only an artificial environment where 'students are rarely pressured, overworked or sharply criticised' (Fine 1996b:51) and though not worthless, did not adequately prepare students for the skills needed in the restaurant (Fine 1996b:52).

Noting that performances are given in highly bounded regions, Goffman differentiates the 'front region' in which a performance is given (1959:110) and the 'back region' where 'the

impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course' (1959:114).

The front region is where we find that aspects of the performance are dramatised or 'expressively accentuated' (ibid.). In contrast, the back region or 'back stage' (Goffman uses these terms interchangeably) harbours aspects of the performance which are at odds with the fostered impression (ibid.) and is sealed off from the audience (1959:116). In this region, preparations are made for the performance e.g. costumes are adjusted, performances are rehearsed, and performers can 'relax' and 'step out of character' (1959:114) e.g. women staff would sit with their legs up in unladylike positions (1959:119). Goffman provides further examples of activities in the backstage life of the kitchen that would discredit the front region performance such as drying wet socks on the steaming kettle, scraping out herring innards with a newspaper and rerolling pats of partly-used butter from the dining hall and serving it again.

Indeed, numerous examples can be cited of backstage shenanigans that would demolish the idealistic views customers have about goings-on in the kitchens. But while some of these kitchen activities may be inexcusable, others such as using convenience foods (when food is expected to be made from scratch) and other shortcuts appear to be necessary (Fine 1996b:27-30).

2.5.2 The dramaturgical perspective

Goffman's dramaturgical perspective on how social life can be studied served as a useful heuristic for interpreting the experience of the group I studied. My response to the conceptual notion of 'performance' and its entailments when applied to the daily experience of trainees provided an analytical structure and stimulated aspects of my analysis. I saw trainee cooks as performers with roles and audiences. They inhabited the

roles of workers and learners, performing to an audience of superiors and peers. On occasion, they performed in a team of workers to the audience of customers who dined at the restaurants.

Their performance as workers required little dramatic realisation on their part; simply engaging with work brought out the performance. This was so because kitchens were typically small places with open layouts and trainees worked in full view of everyone else. Their performance as worker was thus highly visible.

However, their performance as learner was 'expressively accentuated' (Goffman 1959:114) by activities that were remarkable in the production-oriented environment of the kitchens: physically positioning oneself to watch the cooks, making notes in small notebooks and asking questions, all of which placed them outside the productive activity of the kitchen but highlighted their performance in the role of learners.

Concealments that potentially contradicted a performance were apparent when trainees made mistakes and judged what could be concealed and what needed to be admitted to. Difficulties with tasks and making mistakes were common concealments.

Though their fit with the role of cooks might be enhanced by formal culinary qualifications, the trainees did not yet possess this qualification. Moreover most cooks were not formally qualified and often referred to their years of experience as an index of their expertise, leaving little doubt in the minds of trainees on the cultural capital ascribed to formal education.

In terms of method, I have been inspired by Goffman's close study of individuals' activities and actions. In this thesis, I describe trainees' manifestly observable activities and actions and their 'performance in character'. To clarify my interpretations, I relied on information from their 'backstage', 'out of character' interactions with me (see Section 2.5.5).

2.5.3 Researching 'backstage'

In their edited volume of studies in workplace settings, Sarangi and Roberts (1999) adopt the Goffmanian terms 'frontstage' and 'backstage' as a heuristic to delineate workplace research on professional-client encounters, and communication between and across professional groups and other workers, respectively.

In the former category were studies examining the public-facing activities of the workplace e.g. encounters between doctor-patient, social worker-client and news interviewers-interviewees and in the latter category were studies focussing on activities such as inter-professional meetings, less formal encounters, everyday workplace practices and routine activities of auxiliary staff (Sarangi and Roberts 1999:22).

Noting that there has been much work on the frontstage, the writers stress that backstage studies should not be ignored. They acknowledge that professional knowledge is also constituted in the backstage, workplace communication consists of more than expert-lay and service encounters and that the features of workplace discourse are not restricted to frontstage work only (Sarangi and Roberts 1999:22-23).

This research studies the backstage in a particular workplace. The restaurant business may be roughly divided into the public-facing context of the restaurant (frontstage) and the kitchen where the work of producing the output for the restaurant is done (backstage). This research is concerned with the latter context. In the kitchen, talk was not the central work activity; it was but one aspect of workplace life and competent work practices entailed other equally relevant actions in addition to talk.

2.5.4 The different audiences for trainee cooks

Sarangi and Roberts' (1999) use of the distinction between front- and backstage as a heuristic for differentiating types of workplace activities provides a clear contrast between

types of interactions. But the writers also note alternatives to their classification. For example, the frontstage and backstage may be defined in reverse: the frontstage could refer to encounters in professional practice such as social work case conferences or health care team meetings and the backstage, to client interactions (Sarangi and Roberts 1999:23).

The distinction between what constitutes front- and backstage requires deeper analysis indeed when we consider the nature of the audience. Atkinson discusses the audience of medical practitioners:

It is tempting to describe [the everyday life and work of medical settings] in terms of the frontstage and backstage regions of medical work, but that would mistake the dramaturgical ecology of the clinic. Such distinctions are meaningful only in relation to a fixed audience. In the complex modern hospital, medical practitioners, especially from among the junior grades, confront a variety of audiences. Patients are but one kind of audience. The doctor is 'on stage' and is required to 'perform' in rounds, grand rounds, conferences and so on. Indeed from the point of view of the inexperienced practitioner, work with the patient may be the backstage region, compared with the repeated scrutiny of that work by peers and superiors, and her or his consequent obligation to account for clinical work and interpretation. (Atkinson 1999:77)

Atkinson's disagreement with the front/backstage distinction contains an important argument about taking the audience into account when delineating the front- and backstage. He points out that there is a variety of audiences in the hospital, not just patients, and that someone working there is 'on stage' almost all the time that he is at work – the doctor is required to 'perform' in several different settings of varying audiences as well as 'perform' for his peers and superiors.

Atkinson's comments are similarly relevant to trainee cooks; they performed to a range of audiences, not just diners in the restaurants who judged their performance through the dishes they cooked. Their other audiences include their co-workers and the management staff who routinely observed in the kitchens. Just like the doctors in Atkinson's quote who are 'on stage' whenever they are on duty, so too the trainee cooks whenever they were at work in the kitchens. Their performance was in full view of other workers and they were

subjected to scrutiny by one and all. This had implications on their activity and the instruction they received whilst they worked (see Section 5.1.2).

Although the concepts of front- and backstage may not be applicable in Atkinson's study of interns, they were not entirely irrelevant for contextualising the workplace encounters of trainee cooks. For this, we need to bring back the terms 'front region' and 'back region', and re-characterise the restaurant as the front region instead of the frontstage and the kitchen as the back region instead of the backstage. In this formulation, the audience in the front region for both workers and trainees is the diners.

In the back region i.e. the kitchen, workers' performance may be relaxed. But for the trainees, this back region is further divided into frontstage and backstage. The trainees continued to perform frontstage in this back region for the audiences of co-workers and the management staff. They were backstage and properly relaxed in the locker rooms or even somewhere away from the food establishment they worked for, or 'the outside' (Goffman 1959:135). Thus while trainees shared the back region i.e. the kitchen with other workers, they continued to perform frontstage to this audience of workers, only abandoning this performance in backstage contexts away from the kitchens.

2.5.5 The researcher and trainees' 'backstage'

The backstage need not be a physical location. Goffman states that '[by] invoking a backstage style, individuals can transform any region into a backstage' (1959:130). Trainees were backstage in the presence of individuals who were unable to, or whom they trusted not to, affect their performance in any way. These individuals included Shane their former lecturer and me. As a participant observer, this has involved a number of interesting dilemmas though none were in the end significant. What was more crucial was that their orientation towards the workers as opposed to that with Shane and me allowed me to see

and make the analytical distinction between their front- and backstages. It also placed me in a position of trust to elicit their views which enhanced the interpretation of my observations.

It is perhaps also worth noting that being frontstage in the workers' back region had implications on the trainees' participation in the kitchens. In the back region, workers engaged in horseplay, teasing and pranks that cooks indulge in with one another to 'contribute to the satisfaction of working', 'keep everybody's spirit up' or to keep the tension down' (Fine 1996b:118). But there seemed to be limitations to when and to what extent trainees may participate in such behaviour without giving away their performance in front of the workers. Their participation was minimal at first and they only gradually learned 'the rules of the game' (e.g. who teases whom, who gets teased) and how to participate (e.g. the use of profanities is rampant in the kitchens and whilst trainees used them in their backstage talk, they refrained from doing so until after some time on the job). By far the genre most open and accessible to newcomers was griping and once the general target (usually the government but sometimes also particular workers) and stance (usually negative) have been identified, trainees easily performed as a fellow sufferer.

The influence of Goffman's ideas on this research has likely been far more extensive than I have been able to describe in this section but I have concentrated on the more obvious aspects which might help the reader see the source from which some of my analysis and concepts have evolved. I have drawn on Goffman's dramaturgical perspective i.e. the notion of performance, audience and regions. I have also adopted his method of closely studying the activities and actions of individuals and based my analysis on manifestly observable aspects of trainees' performance in character. Lastly I have found that Goffman's discussion of regions provided explanatory value for describing to the reader the

context I was researching (the 'backstage') and my 'researcher status position' (LeCompte and Goetz 1982:37-43).

2.6 Summary

The current study aims to illuminate and describe the experience of vocational students on work placement. In this chapter, I described the formative literature that shaped this research. Previous studies on what students went through in vocational education tended to orient to sociological concerns. This orientation offers only a partial view of the experience of vocational education and leaves much to be explored on the topic. This gap was identified in Salisbury and Jephcote (2010) whose research described the 'learning journeys' of vocational students and teachers, and what it meant to be a participant in vocational education. The current study similarly orients away from the socialisation focus in earlier studies and explores the everyday experience of vocational students. In contrast to Salisbury and Jephcote's (2010) study however, it is based on the work placement and thus extends the existing research from college sites to the placement setting.

As the work placement is generally understood to constitute an aspect of professional development, professional socialisation studies, which consider individuals' movement into new institutional settings and into the practices instilled there (Duff 2008:257), were relevant. The current study attempts to fill gaps in this area of research by adding to the small number of such studies in the workplace and the even fewer studies that have focused on students joining non-academic, non-higher education professions. Its focus is on vocational students working as trainee cooks in professional kitchens.

A third area of research relevant to the current study is work that has been done on workplace learning and I introduced some of the key theories in this chapter. The notion of talk as a form of action which underlies my analysis of talk in this thesis was discussed with

reference to empirical studies that have showed the discursive construction of identities through actions in talk. These studies also provided the basis for seeing identities as socially and ongoingly constructed. Finally, I introduced key ideas from Goffman's monograph, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, that have informed this research.

Having described the formative literature of this research, the task now is to explain how the study was carried out. The following chapter begins with a description of the research context and following this, deals with the research design including the methodology adopted, the rationale for it and the research tradition in which the research is positioned. It also provides details of the data collection methods and the process of analysis. It closes with a discussion of the relevant reliability and validity issues, and ethical considerations in the research.

In this chapter, I present the research context and discuss the methodological issues in this research. I begin with background information on the research context: details on VET provision in Singapore where this research was based, local VET colleges and the particular vocational course in which my research participants were enrolled (Section 3.1). Following that, I describe the research tradition in which this study is positioned and explain the rationale for ethnography, the logic that underlies the approach and how the study might be best positioned within linguistic ethnography. I then provide details of the data collection methods (Section 3.2) and data analysis process (Section 3.3). Recognising that issues of reliability and validity are important to any research, I attempt to address several of these issues (Section 3.4) before concluding the chapter with a discussion of ethical issues in this research (Section 3.5).

3.1 My research context

In this section, I provide a brief historical overview of VET in Singapore, a description of the vocational college and the culinary arts course where I began my fieldwork and brief information on the two work placement sites I observed, leaving to the following chapter a fuller description of the main placement site at which I collected my data. I also introduce my research participants and explain the practical field decision I made in having a main ‘informant’ (Ball 1984:78) as well as selecting Max for this role.

3.1.1 VET in Singapore: a brief historical overview

Being a young nation, Singapore’s formal VET system has a relatively short history. To support the country’s economic growth and progress, it had been regularly reviewed, developed and remodeled over the years. These changes and the related developments are extensively documented in Law (1984a, 1996, 2007). In Law (1984a), the writer reports that

the first move towards organizing industrial training in Singapore was the setting up of the Industrial Training Board (ITB) in 1973. Six years later, the ITB was merged with the Adult Education Board to form the Vocational and Industrial Training Board (VITB) which was tasked as the national authority for promoting, developing and providing vocational training. The VITB was subsequently restructured and in April 1992, the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) was established as a post-secondary vocational education and training institution.

The ITE's subsequent development is charted in Yek and Penney (2006) as comprising three phases. In the first phase, the vocational training institution established itself as a veritable post-secondary institution and shed its poor public image. The success of this phase is demonstrated by increasing acceptability of vocational graduates in employment. Recent statistics show that the employment rate of full-time vocational graduates was close to 90% (ITE Annual Report 2012). Graduates were also qualifying for higher education in diploma courses at polytechnics with one in five doing so in 2009 (ITE Annual Report 2010).

In the second phase of development, the ITE developed its status as a world-class institution. In 2005, it became the first educational institution in Singapore to be awarded the prestigious Singapore Quality Award (SQA). Based on 'universally accepted standards also found in the US Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the European Quality Award and the Australian Business Excellence Award' (Yek and Penney 2006), the SQA was the 'most prestigious award conferred on organizations that demonstrate the highest standards of business excellence in Singapore' (ibid.). In the third and final phase, the ITE pursued a road map to realise the vision of becoming a global leader (ibid.).

Today the three colleges of the ITE have a combined enrolment of more than 25,000 post-secondary students and offer 105 full-time post-secondary courses (ITE Annual Report 2013) ranging from engineering (e.g. marine engineering, automotive technology, electronics and

rapid transit technology) to business (e.g. accounting and banking services) as well as health and fitness (e.g. nursing, opticianry and fitness training) and cooking (e.g. food and beverage operations, pastry and baking, and culinary arts). As stated in the ITE Annual Report 2010, the ITE's mission is to:

create opportunities for school leavers...to acquire skills, knowledge and values for employability and lifelong learning in the global economy. (ITE Mission Statement, ITE Annual Report 2010)

And to achieve this through providing:

... practical hands-on training to equip students with skills for employment and a learning environment that is designed to develop students into confident, independent and thinking practitioners, able to cope with constant changes around them, have passion for what they do and care for the community and society. (Yek and Penney 2006)

3.1.2 Westfield College and the Culinary Arts course

As my aim was to study the experience of vocational students, my plan was to carry out fieldwork as a participant observer in a vocational course at one of the ITE colleges. Since the courses followed a similar structure of classroom-training facility-work placement, I had little qualms about which college or course I attended. But I was certain that I would focus on just one course at one college because I expected to devote myself extensively to it.

Deciding on Westfield College

I decided on Westfield College when the principal responded promptly and positively to my proposed plans. He had experience of academic research and was supportive of my idea to carry out an ethnographic study of a group of students. In a subsequent meeting with him, I also came to know his plans to establish an applied research centre and his interest in research findings on student experiences in the vocational programmes. I shortlisted the long-running and established Mechatronics course and the somewhat new Culinary Arts course as those I would like to attend. It was decided that I would attend the latter.

The Culinary Arts course

Of two-year duration, the Culinary Arts course provided training in kitchen practices, principles and techniques of food preparation as well as the preparation of various Asian dishes (College prospectus, p.315). Training included both theory and practical components. Theory lessons were conducted lecture-style in classrooms while practical lessons were held in the training kitchens on campus. These lessons were taught by lecturers who formerly worked as chefs in the restaurant industry. The curriculum also included personal and communication skills modules including Life Skills, Customer Service and Effective Communication.

In the final semester, students spent six months at work placement 'to gain hands-on practical training in a real work environment' (College prospectus, p.316). In the year that I joined, the students in the course were recommended to kitchens ranging from those in large hotels which catered to hundreds of diners at buffets to middle-range restaurants running lunch and dinner services and small cafés serving light meals. Students may also propose their own preferred food establishments and pending their success with the application and interview at the latter, they had the option to work in those kitchens.

While the terms at the placement kitchens varied, generally students as trainee cooks were paid a monthly stipend as well as split-shift and meal allowances. They worked eight-hour shifts which were split into two four-hour shifts at breakfast and/or lunch and/or dinner service. Just like regular full-time cooks, they worked on a roster basis and had one or two days of rest a week. Invariably, they joined at the lowest rank in the kitchen hierarchy i.e. commis cook 3 although a few gradually progressed to managing their own stations (e.g. sauté, grill, fry, fish) not unlike a full-time chef de partie or station chef.

Upon successful completion of the work placement and having satisfied the course requirements, students graduated with a National Institute of Technical Education Certificate (NITEC).

Students in the course

The students in the course were fairly typical of full-time students in the vocational colleges. The majority of them were between the ages of 17 and 19, with three aged 21, 22 and 24. Most hailed from working-class backgrounds and took a 'lightly vocationalised' (Lauglo 210:224) curriculum in the secondary schools. There were nine female and 24 male students. Many joined the course because of their interest in cooking and pleasant experiences cooking for family and friends. A handful of students were passionate about joining the restaurant industry upon graduation but many were undecided about their career paths. Some hoped to do well enough to further their education and others took a 'wait-and-see' approach, choosing to make plans only after work placement.

As it turned out, my main informant Max continued to work at his placement kitchen as a full-time cook. Other students whom I regularly interacted with such as Kyle, Daryl and Sophie took up diploma courses at a polytechnic and private trade school; Justin, Stanley and Trevor enlisted in compulsory military service; and Vincent, Nurul and Stacy took on full-time work in non-catering fields.

3.1.3 The placement kitchens

Although I carried out fieldwork at college sites and the placement kitchens, the focus in this thesis is more specific. I concentrate on the experience at work placement, specifically the professional kitchens.

The professional kitchens at which I collected my data were The Vanda Club (TVC) and Harajuku Street (HS). My main research site, TVC was a prestigious, members-only social

club located near an upmarket shopping district. A total of nine kitchens served four restaurants and a sports bar. Five male participants did their work placement at TVC and I observed at this site almost daily over a period of four months. Detailed information about this site is provided in Chapter 4.

HS was an upmarket Japanese restaurant located in the commercial district. My three female participants joined this kitchen after having quit two months into their placement at a hotel kitchen. At their request when I visited them on their first day of work, I obtained permission from the owner of the restaurant to observe at this site and began doing so a few days later. As I was already observing full-time at TVC, I made visits to this site only on my rest-days at TVC.

Focus on kitchen data

My decision to focus on data collected in the placement kitchens is based on filling a gap in the existing research on vocational experiences and the challenges with obtaining research access to the professional kitchen. There has been fairly extensive research on student experiences in college sites. For example, the UK-based Teaching and Learning Research Programme funded by the Economic and Social Research Council was a research project that studied 19 learning sites across four further education colleges (Hodkinson et al. 2007, Colley et al. 2003, Wahlberg and Gleeson 2003, James and Diment 2003). In contrast, there have been few studies on the experience of work placement and moreover, none in the setting of the professional kitchen. A study on the placement experience and particularly the professional kitchen would open up the field of research on vocational experiences even more.

The challenges in obtaining research access to professional kitchens also made it seem compelling to share data from this site when it was available. Where fieldwork at the

college was concerned, access did seem formidable at first given the 'hierarchy of consent' (Dingwall 1980) involved in doing research in an educational institution. As I came to know later, researchers had in fact been turned away previously. After meeting with the principal of Westfield College who received my proposal warmly, I was informed that my request to do fieldwork at the college had to be approved by the director of corporate communications and the board of directors governing the vocational colleges. But when permission was granted, access was relatively straightforward. I was introduced to the director of the school of hospitality, the section head of the course and course lecturers. When the school term began, I joined the students in their classes and practical lessons on-campus daily for the entire term.

Obtaining access to the placement kitchens was another matter altogether. Of the nine establishments ranging from hotels to mid-sized restaurants, theme parks and small cafes in which students were placed, only one responded favourably to my request for permission to carry out fieldwork. I did not receive any reply from a number of establishments and despite my best efforts in pursuing my requests, the relevant gatekeepers could not be reached. Those whom I managed to speak to were less than enthusiastic and declined to process my request, which according to them needed to 'go through many levels'. Others outrightly rejected my request and cited the following reasons: the small size of the kitchens and the inconvenience caused by my presence, concerns over safety and hygiene issues as well as the difficulty of explaining my presence to kitchen workers. As a result I had access to only one establishment (TVC) at which five students were placed. Much later I was able to add another restaurant kitchen (HS) that placed three students.

In terms of data collection and analysis, having access to and collecting data at only two establishments was practical and in fact turned out to be more sufficient than I first

thought. TVC operated a number of kitchens and the five students who were placed there were rostered to different kitchens throughout the placement period. Data collection at this site thus involved a range of kitchens and interactions between different groups of workers and my participants. This provided me with a wealth of data and guarded me against idiosyncrasies in the data that might have been due to particular kitchen cultures. At any rate, as I was collecting data through participant observation, it was practically impossible for me to do so at more than the kitchens at TVC and HS.

But my experience with the gatekeepers for the kitchens made me wonder if future research in this setting would be similarly challenging where obtaining access is concerned. While access to the college, as mentioned, was not initially straightforward, there seemed more of a case with the college in terms of what this type of research could offer in the way of findings e.g. insights to inform work preparation courses. The potential challenges with access to kitchens made it seem compelling to contribute data and findings from this site when these were available.

Thus although my fieldwork involved more than 700 hours of participant observation in college sites and work placements, I focus on the data in the latter setting in this thesis. While it was tempting to use all or most of the data I collected i.e. data from both the college sites and the placement kitchens, a simple comparison of the data from the two sites would not have given me depth in analysis and thus, the college data has been excluded. Nonetheless I have drawn on the college data from a classroom lesson to further explain a concept that emerged in the placement kitchen (Section 6.8).

3.1.4 My research participants

Seen in broad terms, my research participants were the students in the culinary course. My fieldwork at college involved observing them as a class group.

During the period of work placement, my participants fell into three groups. The first group consisted of five male trainees at TVC, my main research site. I was a participant observer almost every day at this site and most of my data was collected there. The second group was made up of three female trainees at HS, my secondary research site. As mentioned in Section 3.1.3, the trainees joined HS two months into the placement period after quitting at their previous placement kitchen. As I was already heavily committed to TVC, I dropped in on HS and the three female trainees only on my rest-days at TVC.

My third group of research participants comprised students I did not observe at work placement but from whom I collected data through interviews. Descriptions of all three groups of research participants and my reasons for selecting them are provided in Appendix 5. In what follows, I explain why I observed mainly with Max and how the data from his experience can be seen as indexical of the experiences of trainees in the placement kitchens.

Selective attention

As described in Section 3.1.3, I did not have much choice when it came to selecting the placement kitchens since I was only granted access at TVC and later HS. This meant that I had little choice in selecting the trainees I observed and could only observe the trainees at these two sites. At HS, I was able to participate and observe the three trainees as they worked in the same kitchen. But at TVC, 'selective attention' (Ball 1984:78) was necessary since the five trainees worked in different kitchens within the establishment and it was practically impossible to follow and observe all of them at the same time. I stayed with Max most of the time. As I was observing at this site almost every day, Max featured prominently in my data.

Selecting Max

Although there were five trainees at TVC, I decided to observe mostly with Max because of the friendship we developed during my fieldwork at the college. Like Toma (2000) has argued, I believed this close relationship would lead to better qualitative data. In easing our interactions, it would bring me closer to the experience I was attempting to describe. As Guba and Lincoln put it:

What can be known is inextricably intertwined with the interaction between a particular investigator and a particular object or group. (Guba & Lincoln 1994:110)

Whilst at college, Max was one of the first students who welcomed and accepted me into their group and he often invited me to their social gatherings. Through Max, I got to know other students better and over time, my friendship with Max and his group of friends, which included the other TVC trainees, grew. By the end of the school term, Max seemed keen for me to observe him at work placement and it was fortuitous that I had permission to carry out my fieldwork at TVC where he did his placement. I also had good relations with the other TVC trainees who seemed comfortable with my presence when I observed them on occasion and were forthcoming with their responses when I checked my interpretations with them.

Drawing from Max and other trainees' experience

Max's experience was not however only a source of data in itself. It was also the basis for focused observations of the other trainees and the agenda for my chats, which were often 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess 1984:102), with students at placement kitchens I did not observe. The data in the current study was drawn from Max's experience and complemented by data from other research participants. Many aspects of Max's experience did not vary from other trainees' e.g. the activities engaged in and interaction patterns with workers, albeit some of his responses to situations differed from theirs.

In this section, I provided details of the research context including a brief historical overview of VET in Singapore and a description of the vocational college, course and placement kitchens. I also explained my reasons for focusing on data from the placement kitchens as well as drawing on my observations of Max and the experiences of other research participants. In the following section, I discuss the research tradition in which the current study is positioned.

3.2 Research tradition

3.2.1 Ethnography

As Silverman (2010:10) advised, my choice of qualitative or quantitative method was defined by my research problem. A qualitative approach was chosen as it offered a better fit and purchase for my interest in the student experience of work placement. In broad terms, my questions revolved around 'how' rather than 'how many' (Silverman 2010:11). Quantitative methods such as a survey might provide me with statistical results but an in-depth account of the experience would be elusive.

As I reflected on how I might explore this experience, the potential of ethnography to provide a rich understanding of specific situations was too hard to ignore. To some extent, it seemed a natural choice. Ethnography is aptly suited for studies in which little is known about the phenomenon, process, context or situation (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:22; Dornyei 2007:132; Mackay and Gass 2005:169).

Ethnography's general principles suited this study. Its orientation towards prolonged engagement with the group being studied had the potential for knowing about the group more intimately (Walford 2001:8) and perhaps also faithfully since 'as the researcher becomes a more familiar presence, participants are less likely to behave uncharacteristically' (Walford 2001:9). Moreover, with its focus on naturally-occurring

behaviour in ongoing settings or 'observation of culture *in situ*' (Denscombe 1995:184), ethnography ensured an 'authenticity [that] can help provide an accurate depiction of a given situation or culture' (Heigham and Sakui 2009:95). These principles also held the promise of developing an 'inside standpoint' (Miller et al. 2004:328) for interpreting the student experience.

Ethnography as a mode of inquiry also appealed to me as a researcher. Ethnography today does not have a standard, well-defined meaning (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:2, Walford 2009). Blommaert and Dong (2010) observe that there is a widespread perception of ethnography as simply a method for collecting certain types of data, a view the writers argue must be corrected (2010:5). Hammersley agrees, explaining that while the kinds of methods employed are a key dimension of ethnography, ethnography is fundamentally a methodological approach, 'a specific form of qualitative inquiry' (2006:3).

Agar (2006) puts forth a *logic* that underlies the ethnographic approach. He defines this logic as abductive (from Latin meaning 'lead away'), iterative (from Latin meaning 'to repeat') and recursive (from Latin meaning 'run again' or 'run back'). Developing the notion of abductive logic from the logician and semiotician Charles Peirce (1906), the writer explains that abductive logic paves the way for arriving at new concepts. As deductive logic derives conclusions from previously-known premises and inductive logic focuses on how new material fit existing concepts, both these kinds of logic were 'closed' with reference to the concepts in play. To account for learning something from our experience that takes us to new places, or 'leads us away', ethnographers *abduct* from their data new understandings to explain their observations:

The purpose of ethnography is to go forth into the world, find and experience rich points [raw data], and then take them seriously as a signal of the difference between what you know and what you need to learn to understand and explain what just happened. (Agar 2006)

Abductive logic does not ignore the processes we typically engage in in scientific inquiry. Having derived new concepts to explain our observations, we systematically collect, compare and contrast, and try to determine if the new concepts are fitting explanations for observations. This leads us to the second characteristic of ethnographic logic, which is that abduction in ethnography is necessarily *iterative*:

What an ethnographer learns early might be the most important to report to an outsider but that early abduction fades with time as new rich points come up that were invisible until the earlier work was finished. (Agar 2006)

Finally, abduction in ethnography is also *recursive*. What ensues is a progressive sequence of abduction as we explain one observation after another until we return to the original observation:

Sometimes we use abduction right in the middle of abducting. A surprise happens and we pursue it on the way to constructing a new [concept] that explains it. But as we pursue it, another new surprise comes up, so now we need to pursue that. ... it is recursive in the sense of abducting in the process of abducting. (Agar 2006)

Agar sums up the ethnographic logic as follows:

It is first of all abductive logic, taking surprises seriously and creating new explanations for them. It is also iterative, something that is applied over and over again in the course of a piece of work. And it is recursive, calling on itself to solve a problem that comes up even as it is solving a problem. (Agar 2006)

The notion of an abductive, iterative, recursive logic reads like a set of procedures for engaging in ethnographic work: the ethnographer engages in abduction, iteratively and recursively, in the process of coming up with new concepts to produce new understandings.

But more than that, these procedures point to a way of coming to know about things and explicitly describe ethnography as an epistemological approach. The very engagement with abduction requires a certain way of approaching inquiry. While it may be impossible to approach a new situation without preconceived ideas, it is important to strike a balance between these ideas, be open to 'rich points' and allow the data to speak for themselves.

With iteration and recursion, the researcher is called to be alert to changes, be skeptical towards ready explanations, constantly imagine new and previously unimagined alternatives, and persist with abductive work until no further conclusions can be made. The position taken in this research is to see ethnography as a methodological approach in qualitative inquiry and to follow its *logic* to arrive at new understandings of what is being studied.

My decision to use a qualitative ethnographic approach was based on a pragmatic reasoning that this was what worked best for my research problem, general principles in ethnography as well as the ethnographic logic which appealed to me as a mode of inquiry.

Several features of this research are common to ethnographic work. In what follows, I describe my research based on four key features of ethnography stated in Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:3):

1. People's actions and accounts are studied in everyday contexts, rather than under conditions created by the researcher ... research takes place 'in the field'.

In my fieldwork, I observed my participants in their everyday contexts of college classrooms, on-campus training facilities and work placements. In addition, I interacted with them beyond classroom and work environments. Writing about school ethnographies, Ball (1990:162) observed that the emphasis was almost entirely on classroom life but as he rightly notes, school life does not cease at the classroom door but goes on in the corridors, changing rooms, 'behind the bicycle sheds', and other places that constitute students' 'backstage arenas'. I observed and interacted with my participants outside their school and working hours: attending their social gatherings, hanging out with them individually, chatting with them on social networking websites and exchanging text messages with many of them. These extensive interactions with my research participants built our friendship and helped me to understand their everyday experiences more deeply.

2. Data are gathered from a range of sources ... but participant observation and/or relative informal conversations are usually the main ones. *The writers also state that 'ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry (ibid.).*

I gathered data through participant observation, fieldnotes, interviews and as Hammersley and Atkinson described it, 'whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry'. The last in this list consisted of my relatively informal conversations with participants and other individuals during the fieldwork as well as text messages exchanged with my participants.

3. Data collection is, for the most part, relatively 'unstructured', in two senses. First, it does not involve following through a fixed and detailed research design specified at the start. Second, the categories that are used for interpreting what people say or do are not built into the data collection process ... [but] are generated out of the process of data analysis.

Like many 'novitiate researchers', I had taken a 'plunge into the unknown' and experienced 'risk, uncertainty and discomfort' with the ethnographic approach (Ball 1990:157) when I began this research. Armed with a methodological approach and a general interest in the experience of students in vocational programmes, I began fieldwork with little more than orienting questions (Frank and Uy 2004:270) and continued with anxiety until the development of more focused questions evolved through data collection and analysis. Although not derived through Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006), the categories that developed were grounded in the data and emerged through the research process.

4. The focus is usually on a few cases, generally fairly small scale, perhaps a single setting or group of people. This is to facilitate in-depth study.

Such was the case in this research which has focused on a small group of vocational students and their experience in the placement kitchens.

Guided by the ethnographic logic described by Agar and sharing common features with ethnographic work, this research differs however in certain practical aspects from traditionally full-blown, long-term, comprehensive ethnographies (Green and Bloome 1997:183). In Green and Bloome's terms, it would be described as 'using ethnographic tools', or 'the use of methods and techniques usually associated with fieldwork. These methods may or may not be guided by cultural theories or questions about social life of group members' (ibid.). In addition, it also differs from traditional ethnographies in its orientation to language, specifically talk, as a topic for investigation.

3.2.2 Linguistic ethnography

As this research concerns what students experienced whilst at work placement, I was not only interested in what students did but also what they said in their interactions with others in their world. In addition to ethnography, this research was enhanced by a research perspective that emphasises 'language in use' (Brown and Yule 1983:1) and a systematic and rigorous way of analysing linguistic data. Linguistic approaches to discourse analysis, in emphasising 'language as social interaction' (Schiffrin 1994:414), fulfilled this purpose. In 'linguistic ethnography', Miller and Fox's metaphorical bridge between 'two or more analytic formations that may be linked and made mutually informative, while also respecting the distinctive contributions and integrity of each perspective' (2004:35) is exemplified; and it is in this field which draws on the contributions of ethnography and linguistics that this research is positioned.

Rampton and his colleagues (2004) describe the emergent field of linguistic ethnography as a 'site of encounter' linking up a number of established lines of research including 'New Literacy Studies', Interactional Sociolinguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, neo-Vygotskian research on language and cognitive development, and interpretive applied linguistics for

language teaching (2004:9-11). The writers describe the general orientation of linguistic ethnography as follows:

[Linguistic] ethnography generally holds that to a considerable degree, language and the social world are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity. (Rampton et al. 2004:2)

They argue for the complementarity of ethnography and linguistics, and characterise this combination as 'tying ethnography down' and 'opening linguistics up' (2004:4). Elaborating on the metaphor, Creese states that ethnography provides linguistics with a close reading of context while linguistics provides a reliable analysis of language use not usually available through participant observation and taking of fieldnotes (2008:232).

Where linguistic analysis is concerned, Creese describes a linguistic-ethnographic analysis as combining close detail of local action and interaction within a wider social world, and drawing on the technical vocabularies in linguistics to do so (2008:233). Rampton and his colleagues elaborate on the enhanced value of discourse analysis in ethnography, stating that texts and recordings of interaction taken as the 'point of entry' into cultural analysis provide important data for (citing Duranti 2001:7 and Trueba & Wright 1981) 'counter-arguments and independent testing' (Rampton et al. 2004:6-7). Moreover, the analysis of interactional and institutional discourse can reveal much about social identities which are produced and reproduced in language. Finally, discourse analysis affords distance from the taken-for-granted, commonsense and everyday practice and provides means of uncovering the ideological or interactional processes that constitute it (ibid.).

Although this research is grounded in the logic, principles and data collection methods in ethnography, it also recognises and places emphasis on the role played by language, specifically talk, as participants interacted with others in their world. The position it takes with respect to language is to treat naturally occurring talk as a topic for investigation

instead of exclusively as a source of ethnographic data for example, as participants' oral accounts of themselves and their world. Linguistic ethnography endorses and legitimises this complementarity of ethnographic methodology and linguistic analysis, and suggests a fit for this research within the discursive space it opens up. As Rampton puts it:

In contrast to 'ethnographic linguistics' which would declare 'linguistics' as the principal arena for its activity, 'linguistic ethnography' situates this work within a methodology – ethnography – that is very widely shared not just in anthropology but also in sociology, education, management studies, etc. At the same time, it specifies the linguistics of discourse and text as the primary resource for our efforts to contribute in a distinctive way to the broader enterprise of social science. (Rampton 2007:599-600)

The fields of ethnography and linguistics were drawn on in this research. I relied on ethnographic methodology in terms of the logic proposed in Agar (2006) and ethnographic methods of data collection including participant observation, fieldnotes and interviews. As I was also interested in analysing naturally occurring talk, I collected taped data in audio-recordings of verbal interactions between kitchen workers and my research participants. I describe how data were collected in Section 3.3. The subsequent analysis of ethnographic data made a close examination of the transcripts of taped data necessary and the latter was analysed using linguistic methods. Arguably the combination of these analyses produced a deeper and informed interpretation of the overall data. I describe the process of data analysis in Section 3.4.

3.3 Data collection

As is characteristic of ethnographic research, data for this study was collected through participant observation, fieldnotes and interviews. In addition, I collected taped data of audio-recorded verbal interactions between my participants and kitchen workers. These methods and the associated issues are discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.3.1 Participant observation

Emphasising first-hand experience of the lived world of participants, ethnographic research is characterised by participant observation (Spradley 1980:33, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:3). Becker and his colleagues provide a succinct definition of this method:

For our purposes, we define participant observation as a process in which the observer's presence in a social situation is maintained for the purpose of scientific investigation. The observer is in a face-to-face relationship with the observed, and, by participating with them in their natural life setting, he gathers data. (Becker et al. 1968)

As a participant observer, I joined in activities, shared experiences and took part in interactions among the participants (O'Reilly 2009:150). I was able to see how participants responded to events as they happened and experienced for myself these events and the circumstances that gave rise to them (Emerson et al. 1995:2). Throughout the fieldwork and with my research aim in mind, I thought carefully about what I saw, interpreted it and talked to participants to check emerging interpretations (Delamont 2004:218).

Nature and extent of participation

Unlike the traditional ethnographer who lived among the people whose lives were being documented, I left the fieldwork sites and my participants, literally, at the end of the day. Although my interactions with participants were fairly extensive – during school hours, at work placements and on the many occasions that we hung out together, I 'focus on what happens in a particular work locale or social institution when it is in operation' like most contemporary sociological ethnographers did (Hammersley 2006:4). At their work placement, I assumed the role of a worker, turning up for work on rostered shifts and occasionally doing kitchen tasks that my participants did.

To be sure, it was simply not practical to do all the kitchen tasks that my participants did. Noting the practicalities involved in fieldwork, Delamont (2004:218) states that 'participant observation does not usually mean real participation' because unlike the real participants,

the researcher needs to set aside time for activities such as writing fieldnotes and thinking about the fieldwork. She suggests that it is not a categorical requirement of being a 'participant' that the researcher does the same things as those being observed but rather that he or she interacts with them while they did it. At work placement, I was a participant by virtue of my presence and watching what my participants did as well as talking to them while they worked.

Insider and outsider perspectives

Nevertheless, I participated alongside in certain activities and my involvement *with* the participants and *in* their activities in the kitchens could be described as 'moderate participation' (Spradley 1980:60) where I '[maintained] a balance between being an insider and an outsider' (ibid.). I was an outsider in certain activities due to my lack of experience and knowledge with handling and preparing food as well as in using the kitchen utensils and equipment. Yet I also shifted into the insider's role when I helped with simple chores that the students did such as preparing the mise-en-place, peeling eggs and potatoes and shelling prawns. I was also roped in to play the role of aboyeur on a few occasions when the kitchens were shorthanded and experienced the pressures faced by workers and my participants during a kitchen rush. In my 'moderate participation' in the kitchens, I was sometimes an insider with my participants and at other times an outsider looking in.

The insider/outsider perspective is a concern often raised in ethnographic research. As Hornberger reminds us, being too familiar or too unfamiliar with the culture has implications on ethnographic research:

Being too familiar with the culture being researched may distort interpretation toward shared biases, whereas being too much the stranger inhibits an emic understanding altogether. (Hornberger 1994:689)

Given my moderate participation in the kitchens, was I an insider or outsider and did I have an emic or etic perspective on the experience of work placement? And was I to be considered familiar or unfamiliar with the experience I was researching? Dwyer and Buckle's (2009:60) discussion on 'the space between' provides some resolution to the struggle I faced in identifying myself as an insider (with an emic perspective) or an outsider (with an etic perspective).

Arguing against the dichotomy between insider and outsider status, the writers state that 'it is restrictive to lock into a notion that emphasises either/or, one or the other, you are in or you are out'. They propose a dialectical approach based on seeing that how we are different from others also requires seeing how we are similar. This opens up a space between the extremes of differences and similarities, and allows the position of *both* insider and outsider. This space is poetically described by the writers, drawing on Aoki's (1996) work, as represented by the hyphen in 'insider-outsider'. It is this space that I saw myself in with regard to my participant observer status.

Dwyer goes on to write that the distinction between insider and outsider should not be made to privilege one view over the other: 'As a qualitative researcher I do not think being an insider makes me a better or worse researcher; it just makes me a *different* type of researcher' (emphasis mine). Richards also rejects the notion that one view is 'better' than the other, stating that 'in fact, both are potentially important' (2003:15). This is so because ethnographers seek different perspectives on what they study and will use different theories and techniques to avoid a biased view (ibid.).

I have found that being an insider-outsider and balancing the etic and emic perspectives enriched my insights. Being an outsider, I was prompted to question and think critically about the goings-on as I wanted to understand the context and meanings of what I saw and experienced; on the other hand, being an insider helped me to see things from my

participants' point of view and to assess my ideas and assumptions in light of this. As Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee 1960) says: 'You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view - until you climb into his skin and walk around in it'. Drawing on both insider and outsider perspectives made me analyse my observations in different ways and helped me to critically review my ideas and assumptions.

Form of observation

The form of my observation may be described as 'open ethnographic observation' (Copland and Creese, forthcoming) and my observational notes were used to record the 'lived stuff' (ibid.). With a blank page and pen, I wrote down what I saw, heard, smelled, felt and sensed in the field (ibid.). I was most often by the side of my main informant Max and I shadowed and interviewed him while 'on the move' (ibid.). To widen my observation, I did the same with the other trainees in their kitchens when Max was engaged in activities of a fairly long duration (e.g. peeling 5kg of potatoes).

3.3.2 Fieldnotes

A second important aspect of collecting data in the ethnographic approach is the use of fieldnotes. Emerson and his colleagues summarise the core of ethnographic research as comprising 'first-hand participation in some initially unfamiliar social world and the production of written accounts of that world by drawing upon such participation' (1995:1), and Walford states that 'fieldnotes are the basis on which ethnographies are constructed' (2009:117).

Writers however differ in what they consider to be fieldnotes (Jackson 1990:6, Walford 2009:120). Generally regarded as written texts (Bond 1990:274, Emerson et al. 1995:9), fieldnotes may also include headnotes, a term coined by Ottenberg to refer to 'notes in my mind, the memories of my field research' (1990:144).

In terms of the content of fieldnotes, while Emerson and his colleagues recommend documenting the researchers' own activities, circumstances and emotional responses in fieldnotes (1995:11), Sanjek suggests that personal emotions and reactions be recorded in diaries rather than fieldnotes (1990:108), something Sara Delamont does as well (Walford 2009:122).

However they have been defined, fieldnotes are notes of observations made in the field. Based on Richards' description of the form of fieldnotes (2003:138), my fieldnotes were notes from the field, memos and a research diary. In my notes from the field, I recorded observations made in the placement kitchens and included several features suggested in Richards (2003:130, based on Spradley 1980): the setting (including drawings of the layout of the space and describing the objects found in it); people (main characters in the scene and others who made the occasional appearance, relationships to my participants, interactions and feelings) and behaviour (timing of activities, routines, processes and events).

Sanjek suggests a two-stage process in writing fieldnotes: 'scratch notes' are first made while in the field, and later expanded and developed to fieldnotes (1990:95). Emerson and his colleagues (1995:15) and Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:142) recommend that fieldnotes be written up as soon as possible after the observed action. Connolly (Walford 2009:124) drives home the importance of this when he reports losing 'a fair bit of notes' by not writing them up and not understanding the shorthand he wrote in his notebook even after only a week.

I adopted Sanjek's (1990:95) two-stage process of writing scratch notes while in the field and expanding on the details at the earliest possible opportunity. This was usually when I returned home from the kitchens. On occasion, I was simply too exhausted upon reaching home to type up well-developed fieldnotes and would fill in as much detail as I could to my

scratch notes, leaving the task of typing them up to a day or so later. Paranoid as I was over Connolly's (above) experience, I did not dare to leave more than two days before doing so. In my typed-up fieldnotes, I included memos in a separate column where I recorded 'interpretive asides' (Ball 1984:94), as well as possible connections with theory and methodological points (Richards 2003:137). I also used a research diary to record my daily activities and reflections on the research process (ibid.).

3.3.3 Interviews

In addition to participant observation and fieldnotes, I collected data through interviews. Interviews 'lie at the heart of qualitative research' (Richards 2009:195) and are a frequently used qualitative method (Benson et al. 2006; Roulston 2010; Mann 2011). Kvale and Brinkmann explain the qualitative research interview as attempting 'to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations' (2009:1). This was the approach taken in my interviews.

By definition of participant observation, my observations in the field included 'encounters with participants that are to all intents and purposes brief and informal interviews' (Richards 2009:184). Being around the kitchens over an extended period, it seemed natural that I did what O'Reilly has described: 'tune in to [conversation and talk], engage in it, and to ask questions pertinent to her own research as and when she can' (O'Reilly 2009:125). Often, these were spontaneous conversations which arose in the situation and unfolded whilst trainees and workers were working.

In addition to these data from the trainees and workers at TVC and HS, I collected data with students working in other placement kitchens when I met them for coffee every few weeks. At the end of my fieldwork at college, several students appeared to anticipate feelings of

isolation as they began the new and unfamiliar experience of working life and requested that I 'visit' them during the placement period. As I had developed good relationships with them and did not want them to feel abandoned, I decided I might do so but I was not sure initially how I was to find the time given my daily commitment at TVC.

However after about a month of daily observation with the five TVC trainees and spending almost every waking moment with them, especially Max, I decided having some 'breathing space' would be beneficial to them and me. I began scheduling sessions to meet the other students during my four-hour split-shift breaks between lunch and dinner service at TVC. Initially, I simply recorded these informal sessions in my fieldnotes and had no clear idea what I would do with the material. I thought at the very least, they showed that I was 'doing something' when I was away from my main research participants. Soon though, with the students' permission, I began audio-recording these sessions when I realised they provided valuable insights to experiences at other placement kitchens and helped me generate and develop ideas from my observations at TVC.

The form of these interviews, based as they were on an established relationship with the participants, was more akin to 'in-depth conversations' (O'Reilly 2009:125) than the 'standard interview':

We usually begin with an outline, guide or plan, but are content to let the interviewee wander off what we think is the point. An ethnographer is usually attempting to learn about participants from their own perspective, to hermeneutically understand the other's view, and this will not be achieved by imposing one's own line of questioning on people. (O'Reilly 2009:126)

The writer also cites William Foote Whyte as saying that:

The whole point of not fixing an interview structure with pre-determined questions is that it permits freedom to introduce materials and questions previously unanticipated. (Whyte 1981:35)

My interviews followed a naturally-flowing discussion style in what may be described as the 'unstructured' interview (Dornyei 2007:135) and 'non-directive interviewing' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:101). I had a general idea to cover topics, primarily based on how they were getting on but later also on their placement experience, but how these issues were taken up and developed was left very much to the flow of the discussion.

On occasion, I attempted 'semi-structured' interviews (Dornyei 2007:136) instead of allowing the discussion to flow naturally but this style did not help very much with my research. In a few instances, students asked me hesitantly after I switched off the recording device whether they had given me the 'correct' answer. It also appeared to put the students in a spot between wanting to help me with my research and struggling with their responses. In the end, I became selective about using this style.

As my plan was to focus exclusively on participant observation so that I would be 'physically and ecologically penetrating [my participants'] circle of response to their social situation, or their work situation, or their ethnic situation or whatever' and to be 'a witness to how they react to what gets done to and around them' (Goffman 1989:125-126), this research was not an interview-based study. I used the interview data for illumination (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:102-103) and triangulation.

Arksey and Knight (1999:21) define triangulation as 'the basic idea ... that data are obtained from a wide range of different and multiple sources, using a variety of methods, investigators or theories' and it had the two main purposes of 'confirmation' (Denzin 1970, cited in *ibid.*) and 'completeness' (Jick, 1983, cited in *ibid.*). Interviews provided this triangulation; the interview data guided my observations and fed my interpretations.

To illustrate, the concept of origination (Chapter 6) arose from my observations and what other students told me about their kitchens and their experiences. I had observed kitchen

workers' behaviour (and Max's response) and through interviews with students at other placement kitchens realised there were regularities across kitchens (and other trainees' lack of an equivalent response). These data were combined with other field encounters (interviews with Nurul's employer and a college lecturer). The synthesis of observational and interview data led to 'finding' the specific action of origination in the work placement kitchens.

Although I collected data through interviews, my primary data set in analysis was fieldnotes. This is not an interview-based study and interview data informed analysis rather than formed a data set to be analysed in its own right; more specifically interview data served triangulation and illumination purposes. In the field, listening to and paying close attention to the interview data led to reviewing, developing, refining and constructing my ongoing analysis; and in the subsequent formal analysis, interview data was drawn on, where appropriate, to illustrate analytic claims.

Given the focus of this research on trainee experience, it might be suggested that retrospective or post-experience interviews with the trainees would have given me a trainee perspective. However my focus was to understand the experience of being a trainee *as it happened* and for this, encounters *in the moment* were much more valuable. Trainee reflections following the work placement would inevitably be filtered through the lens of its outcome and mediated by other experiences following its conclusion. Moreover within the space limitations of the thesis, it would be practically impossible to give to trainees' personal reflections the adequate treatment that it should be due; for the same reason, all that I could have done with post-placement interviews was extract one or two personal reflections and these were not at all central to my study.

3.3.4 Audio-recorded data

In addition to participant observation, fieldnotes and interviews, I collected audio-recordings of verbal interactions between kitchen workers and my participants as I planned to carry out discourse analysis of verbal interactions. The relevant issues related to the audio-recorded data are recording and transcription.

Recording

Verbal interactions and the material recorded in the kitchen setting were unlike those in most workplaces studied in linguistic research which ‘involved interactions in which the participants keep relatively still, and the background noise levels are relatively low’ (Holmes and Stubbe 2003:18-19). Kitchens were noisy and busy places and this posed particular challenges in collecting spoken interaction. Holmes and Stubbe summarise the main challenges:

In addition to the obvious problem of obtaining good quality recording in a noisy environment, there were physical challenges such as the issue of a safe place to locate equipment ... in a context where informants moved around constantly. It was also crucial that we obtained essential contextual information about each interaction. Most interactions were very brief and remarkably context dependent; workers were concise and did not waste words in a context where the focus was on the production activity. (Holmes and Stubbe 2003:26)

Of the challenges mentioned, obtaining contextual information about each interaction was mostly resolved by my presence at the interactions and my fieldnotes. But obtaining good quality data and locating the recording equipment were issues that had to be managed. There was no point in locating the recording equipment in a fixed location as my participants moved around in the course of their work and interactions could occur anywhere in the kitchens. As I was usually physically positioned near Max, I carried around a small Sony digital voice recorder to tape his interactions with workers. Although I was conscious of positioning myself in order to obtain better-quality data, background noise from kitchen equipment and other workers’ conversations sometimes interfered with the recordings, making some of the data inaudible.

My participants knew I was recording interactions from their experience with me at college. Nonetheless, I reminded them again that I would be recording their interactions and requested their permission. All of them agreed to my request.

With kitchen workers, I sought permission from those with whom Max regularly interacted. Following Richards' advice, I explained my project in general terms, my reasons for recording the interactions and assured them of confidentiality (2003:177). I also explained that I would not allow other workers including management to listen to the recordings without their permission (Holmes and Stubbe 2003:26). They were fine with the recordings although some expressed doubt that there was anything to be analysed in their interactions with the trainees.

Despite having the recorder, I tried my best to note exchanges in verbatim. On several occasions, workers peered over my shoulder as I wrote and read aloud what they saw, often laughing at seeing their interactions with Max represented on paper. A few workers suggested I used a video-recorder so that I would have a visual memory of the scenes after teasing me about the speed at which I was frantically writing.

The recorder I used had a 4GB memory which allowed me to record for the duration of each lunch and dinner shift in a working day. I transferred the recorded data to my computer at the end of each day.

Transcription

In writings on transcription, there have been changing perspectives over the years on transcription conventions including 'the search for conventions, acceptance of a multiplicity of conventions, and abandonment of the quest for standardization in favour of contextualized negotiation of method' (Lapadat and Lindsay 1999:67). To the last, Kvale

writes that the pertinent question researchers should ask themselves is, ‘What is a useful transcription for my research purposes?’ (1996:166).

In selecting a transcription system, I am guided by Ochs’ (1999 [1979]:168) observation that an important feature of a transcript ‘is that it should not have too much information. A transcript that is too detailed is difficult to follow and assess’. She stresses though that the basis for the selective transcription should be clear (ibid.). For my purposes of discussing general features of talk, a standard form of transcription was sufficient. I relied on most of the conventions in Richards (2003:173-174) and added one other, a different font type, for translated text (the full list is in Appendix 1).

Temple and Young raise several issues related to translation including the need to identify the act of translation so that the reader is better informed when engaging with the text (2004:164). Interactions in my data often involved Mandarin, code-switching between Mandarin and English as well as the use of specific terms in Hokkien and Malay. I have translated all non-English text into English. As an insider to this language community, I am confident that the translation closely approximates the meanings expressed by participants in the interactions.

In my translation, I aimed at conveying meaning with minimal changes to the speaker’s utterance and have included and/or omitted words as well as made changes to grammar and syntax only where necessary. The following provides a simple illustration with my changes underlined and comments in the right-most column:

<i>Text</i>	‘拿 去 洗 一下’	The meaning expressed is a directive to perform the action of taking an object to be washed. I added deictic and pronominal references to make this meaning clearer than in the literal translation. The adverb ‘once’ is a literal translation; the meaning it expresses is to do the activity simply and without much hassle, in this case, a quick
<i>Literal translation</i>	Take go wash once	
<i>My translation</i>	Take <u>this</u> wash <u>it</u>	

		rinse or a quick wash with detergent.
--	--	---------------------------------------

In the transcripts, I provide non-verbal information when this can be retrieved from my fieldnotes or when I have adequate understanding of the events such as a physical demonstration of a technique. This information gives the reader ‘a sense of the event as experienced by the researcher-transcriber’ (Bird 2005:244). The following provides an illustration: the non-verbal information in the transcript is underlined in the left-hand column and an excerpt from my fieldnotes is in the right-hand column:

4	Max	<u>((Goes to the cooking station and sees the</u>	[121123.002/47:00]. Eric calls Max over. Max sees the meats on the countertop and asks Eric if he was to season them. Max seasons the meats and places them on the grill.
5		<u>meats on the countertop)) do the seasoning do</u>	
6		<u>that kind of thing ar?</u>	
7	Eric	<u>Ar because I want you to do orders () whole day cut</u>	
8		<u>things hor anyone is able to do it ar</u>	
9	Max	<u>((Prepares to season the meats)) have to () have to</u>	
10		<u>add the seasoning ar?</u>	

Having discussed my methods of collecting data, I conclude this section with details of my fieldwork schedule.

3.3.5 Fieldwork schedule

I was a participant observer in three contexts namely college classrooms, on-campus training facilities and work placement, albeit as explained in Section 3.1.3, I focus only on data from the third context in this thesis. Table 3.1 shows details of my observation schedule in the placement kitchens. The full and detailed fieldwork schedule including observation at college sites and the collection of interview data is in Appendix 2.

Row	Start	End	Site
1	09.07.12	29.08.12	College (classrooms)
2	09.07.12	29.08.12	College (training kitchen)
3	01.10.12	13.10.12	Kaven's

4	15.10.12	26.10.12	Joai Asian
5	31.10.12	08.11.12	Garde manger
6	14.11.12	30.11.12	Maurie's
7	03.12.12	04.12.12	Butchery
8	10.12.12	11.12.12	Esbar
9	17.12.12	23.12.12	Patisserie
10	05.01.13	11.01.13	Maurie's
11	15.01.13	26.01.13	Prome
12	29.11.12	17.01.13	Harajuku Street

Table 3.1 Observation schedule

Although the analysis in this thesis is based on data from the placement kitchens, I mention my fieldwork in the college in order to provide a sense of the time I spent with my participants prior to joining them at their work placements. This period of fieldwork occurred in the final eight-week term in the students' course at college. I observed theory lessons in the classrooms as well as practical lessons in the training kitchen daily. In total, I attended 40 theory and 10 practical lessons (rows 1-2 in Table 3.1).

During this period, I got to know my participants, regularly spent time with them after school hours and established firm friendships. In addition, having experienced the training kitchen, I also felt rather prepared to enter a 'real' kitchen. For example, I had become familiar with kitchen equipment such as the 'salamander' where food was placed to keep warm prior to serving and a variety of knives. I also learned about different types of knife cuts as well as safe practices in the kitchen such as announcing one's presence and movement in tight spaces and understood the emphasis on proper attire such as non-slip kitchen boots. Having this information allowed me to write about activities in the placement kitchen later.

Certain terms learned during this period became part of my vocabulary e.g. 'slam', 'eighty-six', 'aboyeur' and 'mise-en-place'. Together with the common experiences over the eight weeks, these new words made me somewhat of an insider with my participants since I

could understand the culinary terms they used in conversation with each other and could use them myself to establish my group membership.

My fieldwork at TVC and HS is indicated in rows 3-11. The TVC trainees were allocated two- to three-week stints in each kitchen before moving on to the next kitchen in the establishment. The sequence through the kitchens differed so that trainees worked in different kitchens during each stint, although there were a few overlaps where two trainees worked in the same kitchen.

My observation schedule at TVC was based on Max's work schedule. He began at Kaven's (row 3) and finished at Prome (row 11). I observed at Maurie's twice (rows 6 and 10) because Max (as well as the other trainees) 'returned' to several kitchens during the six-month period of placement. Although my participants worked eight-hour shifts, there was a four-hour split shift break between lunch and dinner service and in effect, I hung out with them through 12-hour days. In total, I observed over a period of 16 weeks involving more than 550 hours during my fieldwork at TVC.

Fieldwork at HS involved far fewer visits. As I was already committed daily to the kitchens at TVC, I observed only on my rest-days and alternated my observation between trainees' four-hour lunch and dinner service shift. I made six visits totalling 24 hours to this site.

In this section, I described how I collected data through participant observation, fieldnotes, interviews and audio-recordings as well as provided details of the fieldwork schedule. In the following section, I discuss how the data was analysed.

3.4 Data analysis

My primary data sets were the fieldnotes of my observations and transcripts of worker-trainee interactions. Although I wanted to bring the two data sets (fieldnotes and transcripts) together, I was uncertain how this should be done at the start of data analysis. I

decided to concentrate first on the fieldnotes and derive as clear a picture as I could of the world of the kitchen and trainees' everyday experience in that world. I expected that this would lead me to a sense of where talk, and hence the linguistic analysis, would fit in in the study. The stages of my analysis are shown in Table 3.2 and described in the sub-sections that follow it.

Stage	Data	Description	Aim	Activity
1	Fieldnotes	Explore	'First pass'; get a sense of the data	Open coding
2	Fieldnotes	Immersion	Deep engagement with the data	Focused coding involving: Monitor and review Make comparisons Establish relationships Refine categories Ask questions Reflect Mental dialogue Breaking the gridlock Taking stock External input Writing memos Respondent validation
3	Fieldnotes	Audit	Checking the data	Refutability Comprehensive data treatment Deviant cases
4	Transcripts	Linguistic analysis	Investigate and interrogate insights from Stages 1, 2 and 3	Fine-grained analysis of transcribed talk
5	Extracts	Production of the report	Compose the 'story' from the analysis with extract examples	Select extract examples and writing up

Table 3.2 Stages of analysis

3.4.1 Stage 1: Explore

I was initially suspicious of the much talked-about advantages of using computer software in data analysis (e.g. Seale 2010:251-266) but the sheer volume of data made it seem worthwhile to explore the possibilities. I used NVivo10 which I downloaded from my university website.

My aim at this stage was to re-familiarise myself with the world captured in my fieldnotes. I carefully read through the whole data set seeking to *know* my data (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:162, emphasis in original). In the process, I also started to write memos recording questions prompted by the data, my reflections on each kitchen, noteworthy events, ideas for lines to pursue, nodes which were frequently being coded at etc. I continued to keep and write memos throughout the analysis and used them to direct and stretch my thinking as I analysed the data. I began coding the data after several detailed and careful readings. When I had completed a first round of open coding, re-read my memos and chased up ideas by reviewing the codes, I felt I had a good sense of the data and moved on to Stage 2.

3.4.2 Stage 2: Immersion

In the second stage, my emphasis was on deep engagement with a view to ‘purposive coding’ (Richards 2005:85) in order to drive the development of ideas and themes. I read through the fieldnotes again in the period that my NVivo software crashed and was being revived by the software company. When I began a new NVivo project, I approached the data in a more focused way, based on ideas from the first coding, and coded the data again. Perhaps because I now had a better fix on the data i.e. segments of text that would be relevant (activities, actions, encounters between trainees and workers) and those that would probably not be (e.g. interactions with certain individuals who worked in the building but not the kitchens), this second coding involved a deeper level of critical engagement and a longer period of immersion which led to themes emerging.

In what follows, I will attempt to ‘show my workings’ in the analytical process, as recommended by Holliday (2002:47). I present the process in a linear and sequential fashion but the ‘activities’ in it (listed in the rightmost column in Table 3.2) were in fact

simultaneous, recursive and iterative. These activities helped me think deeply about the data.

It is difficult to illustrate the thinking-work behind the activities, which seems important to explain how the themes emerged. An attempt is made with extracts from my memos. I wrote memos constantly during data analysis – stopping every now and then from coding data to write questions, thoughts and ideas; reflections; to-do tasks such as chasing up relevant reading material; updates on progress and further lines to pursue etc. When I prepared to write up this section, I coded my memos and derived categories for my activities. Extracts from my memos relating to the activities are provided in Appendix 7. These provide a sense of the thinking-work involved in the analytical process ('how I thought'). In the following paragraphs, I report on what I did with respect to the activities.

Monitor and review, make comparisons, refine categories, establish relationships

As I coded the data, I *monitored and reviewed* the codes regularly, typically when I completed coding for each kitchen. I *made comparisons* across codes to ensure extracts fitted into the categories and *refined* the categories by re-allocating extracts where necessary as well as defined the categories (Braun and Clarke 2006:92). With the 'sets' function in the software, I organised categories according to kitchens and I compared sets of these to see patterns and anomalies across the entire data set. As associations between codes became apparent, I *established relationships*, linking codes using the software's 'relationships' function or made 'child' nodes in a process generally known as 'axial coding' i.e. 'the act of relating concepts/categories to each other' (Corbin and Strauss 2008:198). The relationships involved a sort of 'cause→effect' link: for example, assigning tasks to trainees → instruction provision on techniques, procedures and requirements. The child nodes were 'type-of' or 'aspect-of' the individual codes: for example, the activity of making notes in notebooks was an aspect of 'active watching'.

'Goad data into speaking'

To 'goad data into speaking' (Barry Turner, 1993; cited in Richards 2005:67), I probed my data in a variety of ways. I *asked questions* (e.g. 'what is the relationship/difference between code X and code Y?', 'what was going on in this extract?'), *reflected* on emergent ideas (e.g. assigning tasks to trainees involved more than work allocation and the activity of watching was more than simply 'looking'), played the devil's advocate in *mental dialogues* (e.g. 'how do you know that trainees were 'being watched' (one of my codes) as they worked and what's the big deal with that?'), as well as engaged with 'problems' and mulled over consequences (e.g. 'should the 'critical incidents' be self-contained units or segmented and distributed among the codes?').

The activity of *breaking the gridlock* involved freeing myself from initial assumptions. For example, I had many assumptions about kitchen work based on my reading of texts such as Gary Fine's (1996b) *Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work* and George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933). But whilst the general descriptions of kitchens fitted what I saw in my fieldwork, there were specific differences in interactions among workers and those between them and trainees that these writers whose informants were mainly full-time workers had no reason to address. Attempting to break the gridlock created by assumptions from my readings, I wrote memos of my intuitions and assumptions to remind myself of the differences between their data and mine. *Breaking the gridlock* also helped me to refine my concepts, for example the conceptualisation of 'origination' which was initially developed in a sample analysis for a university examination panel. Not wanting to be locked in by that prior analysis, I left the concept out for much of my analysis and coded 'doing'-type actions not in terms of their source ('origination' involved self-initiated actions, see Chapter 6) but in terms of what they were directed at i.e. tasks, types of work, whom

with etc. Only when the concept grew in significance as I coded did I bring it back to explain a specific and important action.

Taking stock involved stepping back from the entire data set to review the emergent ideas and storylines that could be developed (e.g. 'how were workers orienting to trainees and what did this say about their experience?'; 'how would you describe their opportunities for learning?'; 'how were trainees constructing their identities?'). I sought *external input* by reading texts on data analysis to guide my analytic technique, consulting existing literature on the emergent themes and working on my supervisor's comments in discussions and written drafts. As mentioned, I also *wrote memos* constantly, filling them with ideas that popped up, then developing some of these and rejecting others.

Respondent validation (Silverman 2010:278) was sought by checking my interpretations with participants. This strategy has 'an uncertain and sometimes contested place in ethnographic analysis' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:181). The writers note that people may not be able to account for their own actions or it might be in their interests to misinterpret or mis-describe their actions, or to counter the interpretations of the researcher (ibid.). Likewise, Fielding and Fielding state that 'there is no reason to assume that members have privileged status as commentators on their actions ... such feedback cannot be taken as direct validation of refutation of the observer's inferences' (1986:43).

Perhaps the problem arises if these accounts are given a privileged and exclusive status in the research process but clearly they did not have to be accorded this status. Respondent validation may be 'inadequate on its own but it provides an invaluable extra perspective' (Richards 2003:287) and 'another source of data and insight' (Fielding and Fielding 1986:43). Checking my interpretations with participants made me think harder about my data, guided further analysis based on the 'extra perspective' and gave me assurance for my claims.

The above activities in the period of immersion led to themes emerging. Along the way I also responded to key issues and questions which provided the structure and focus of this study. Some of these and my reflections on them include:

1. A focus on trainees' activity rather than workers':

One observation just occurred to me. What is the relationship between the broad categories of worker nodes and trainee nodes? I have these because I wanted to be specific about which perspective the codes were pointing to. Of course, one without the other doesn't make sense i.e. what the trainees do is related to what workers 'do' to them. But why should you be coding from the workers' perspective when you're studying the student experience? While the actions and activities of workers were important, they were so only in relation to trainees. This is properly my focus and it is their actions and activities that should be of interest. (NVivo memos, 130928)

2. Pursuing a particular direction in the analysis:

Holliday (2002:101-102) was right! He said the 'process of analysis, sorting and organising has the potential to take the argument in many directions'. He had ten; thankfully, yours is far less. Still you have to decide which you are going with and why. The trainees' experience of learning is far more prominent than identity construction. It is also aligned with your original intention to say something about the workplace learning experience and you could feed back findings to college and contribute to workplace learning research. (NVivo memos, 131118)

3. Mulling over where the analysis of verbal interactions fits:

Now that you've analysed the ethnographic data and 'seen' that physical actions i.e. doing and watching (and doing-watching i.e. origination) pervaded the working days of trainees and that instruction gets done through directives and physical demonstrations which involved little talk, what IS the point of extended interactions? Why did they occur? What did the interactions do, or more precisely, what did people do through them? Something to think about when you analyse the verbal interactions... (RD, 140520)

3.4.3 Stage 3: Audit

At this stage, my aim was to check that the analysis of the fieldnotes data was rigorous, sound and valid. I was guided by Silverman's recommendations to 'refute assumed relations between phenomena' through the constant comparative method, as well as

comprehensive data treatment and deviant case analysis (2010:278-284). Although these recommendations were put into practice in Stage 2 (particularly constant comparison and comprehensive data treatment), I combed through the analysis to check my coded extracts and the categories and themes several times until I was satisfied with the overall analysis. In terms of deviant case analysis, I carefully reviewed the data again for anomalies I might have failed to pick out in Stage 2 and was able to account for them. I also wrote drafts to test my analysis and clarify my thinking.

3.4.4 Stage 4: Linguistic analysis

With insights from the analysis of the fieldnotes, I had a clear idea of the place of talk in this context, types of talk that occurred, their value in presenting learning opportunities and the varied nature of verbal interactions between groups of workers and my main participant, Max. I listened to the audio-recordings several times and analysed the transcripts of extended interactions in detail:

I considered the extended interactions based on the idea of talk-as-action and tried to see what the verbal actions of worker and trainee were doing. You've looked at turns and actions implemented through the turns. You noticed that talk was collaborative, that both participants were orienting to each other, that one was maximising learning opportunities and one was providing teaching. That IS the point of extended interactions. They didn't have to occur and when they did, something special was going on. You saw how both parties were orienting to each other. You also know that not everyone talks so much with Max. It's something to do with their relationships... (RD, 140531)

In my analysis, I focused on what was being accomplished through talk and drew on terms and principles from Conversation Analysis.

3.4.5 Stage 5: Production of the report

In the final stage of the analysis, I selected extract examples and wrote up the analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006:93). I exported the NVivo nodes and the extracts contained within them into a Microsoft Word document. I read through the extracts again and organised

them in order to have a spread of examples from the various kitchens when I did my writing up.

To produce a detailed analysis, Braun and Clark state that it is important to consider the themes themselves as well as each theme in relation to others so that the 'story' that each theme tells fits into the overall 'story' about the data (2006:91). The story in this thesis is that of trainee experience at work placement and it is told through the actions of doing, watching, origination and talk. These actions pervaded the day-to-day world of the trainees, fitted them into the work context and built relationships with workers. The details of these actions are presented in the three analysis chapters (doing and watching in Chapter 5, origination in Chapter 6 and talk in Chapter 7).

3.5 Reliability and validity

The credibility of one's research may be established through the reliability and validity of findings (LeCompte and Goetz 1982:31); unfortunately, it is on these bases that qualitative research is often doubted (Seale and Silverman 1997:397). LeCompte and Goetz note that 'the results of ethnographic research often are regarded as unreliable and lacking in validity and generalisability' (1982:32).

In response to these charges, researchers have developed various positions. Some have regarded reliability and validity as inappropriate to the qualitative paradigm and rejected them (Macdonald and Walker 1975), others have translated them as they are used in quantitative research to the work done by qualitative researchers (LeCompte and Goetz 2001; Cho and Trent 2006) and proposed alternative formulations (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Rallis and Rossman 2009). Yet others have shifted their focus away from these constructs to establish criteria and standards for evaluating the overall quality of completed research (Tracy 2010) – although this focus on end-goals has been criticised for running the risk of

missing serious threats to reliability and validity until it is too late to correct them (Morse et al. 2002:14).

The plethora of views underscores the importance of addressing the issues concerned if qualitative methods are to be taken seriously (Silverman 1997:19) and not be left 'in an indefensible position before [positivist] critics' (Erickson 1984:59). In what follows, I discuss reliability and validity issues in this research by drawing on suggestions in LeCompte and Goetz (1982) as well as Tracy's (2010) concept of sincerity which underlines my approach throughout the research process.

3.5.1 Reliability

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) state that reliability refers to whether different researchers would observe the same phenomenon or derive the same constructs in the same or similar settings and the degree to which they would match a set of previously generated constructs to data in the same way as did the original researcher (1982:32). This is a question of replicability and as the writers state, it is a 'herculean problem' for research concerned with naturally occurring data (1982:35). Nonetheless, one could make explicit the decisions taken in the research process and use strategies that would reduce the effects of subjectivity on our data (1982:37-43). The following list shows the decision items suggested in LeCompte and Goetz (ibid.) for which information should be provided for reliability to be enhanced and the corresponding sections in the thesis where this information is presented:

- Method of data collection - Section 3.3
- Method of data analysis - Section 3.4
- Informant choices - 'Research participants and reasons for selection', Appendix 5
- Use of low-inference descriptors in fieldnotes - Sample of fieldnotes, Appendix 6

3.5.2 Validity

LeCompte and Goetz state that validity refers to the extent to which observations are authentic representations of some reality and the degree to which such representations may be legitimately compared across groups (1982:32). This is a question of the accuracy of findings. The writers note that this is a major strength of research that emphasises prolonged engagement in the field through which continual data analysis and comparison to refine constructs enable a close match between researcher's categories and participant reality (1982:43). Furthermore, participant observation enables the researcher to reflect the reality of life experiences of participants more accurately (ibid.). The entire research process also involves 'self-monitoring' which exposes all phases of the research to continual questioning and re-evaluation (ibid.).

As a participant observer, my engagement in the field occurred almost daily over a period of six months. This involved more than 700 hours of participant observation in the sites of college, training kitchen and work placement, not including time spent with participants during interviews and unrecorded durations of social activities with them.

Through extensive interactions with my participants, I developed an emic perspective and regularly experienced aspects of the life of my participants – the rules of behaviour, 'appropriate' responses to situations, the topics of talk and the stances I must take, things I should look forward to and things I shouldn't, songs, movies and video clips that would interest my 'friends' on Facebook etc. It may be argued that some of what I learnt is merely a function of my meeting the expectations of my participants in the role they ascribed to me and did not necessarily suggest that I 'know' their reality. I agree with that if it does not obscure the fact that to function effectively (and productively for a researcher) within the group, it was necessary to learn and accept certain rules, align my stances with its

members and adopt the 'reality' of the group in order to do so. Being a participant observer arguably provided me with some sense of their reality.

I also adopted the constant comparative method (Heath and Street 2008:32) in relation to my data and analytical memos (Richards 2003:137) and during the fieldwork, often reflected on my observations, hunches/curiosity and concepts from the literature (Heath and Street 2008:34). The reflexive approach underlying ethnography and ethical research practice, which LeCompte and Goetz term 'self-monitoring' (1982:32), pervaded my time in the field and the research process.

However, 'by-definition' explanations of how validity is inherently ensured in ethnographic research would not, as Lynch (2003:157, cited in Dornyei 2007:55) points out, satisfy many people and evaluation audiences will expect explicit evidence in support of validity. Drawing on LeCompte and Goetz (1982:44-53), I discuss three threats posed to validity which are relevant to my research.

Observer effects

An inevitable consequence of participant observation, observer effects threaten validity because they affect the nature of the data collected. Observer effects arise from the observer's mere presence in the situation (Schwartz and Schwartz 1955), 'abnormal' participants who seek to portray themselves in the best light to the observer (LeCompte and Goetz 1982:46), degrees of the researcher's attachment and detachment to participants, and the dangers of the researcher 'going native' resulting in biases from 'overrapport' with the informants (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:87).

I attempted to minimise observer effects by 'merging' myself with my participants so that they 'forgot' that I was a researcher researching them. To be sure, this is an ideal much hoped for but doubtfully ever achieved. Nonetheless, a conversation with a participant

suggested that although they did not forget that I was around, they did not seem to care that I was. Chatting with Stanley while he worked one day, I asked him how he felt about being watched and he replied that he felt uneasy and pressured to perform. Slightly disappointed with myself since I dropped in on occasion to observe and chat with him and never detected his discomfort, I asked him why he never mentioned it, implying that I was sorry and would not observe him further. Stanley clarified that he had meant 'other people' like Chef Jeremy who routinely walked around to check on what the trainees were doing and not me.

With other individuals in the placement kitchen, observer effects were very real and my presence in relation to them affected the data I collected with my participants. I was told by kitchen workers that Jeremy, the executive sous chef, hardly walked around or stood around to chat with them before I joined the kitchens. I asked them why they thought my presence made the difference and they said he was trying to impress his position on me. Judging from the conversations he had with me and my participants, Jeremy appeared indeed to try to impress, often regaling us with stories from his long experience and providing advice to my participants on how to succeed as a chef. These interactions were not in the end significant since they were irrelevant to my analysis (primarily because Jeremy was not a typical 'worker' given his role in the kitchens) and were not included.

I also kept a research diary where I recorded my feelings and thoughts, assumptions and biases and mentally dialogued with myself about how these could cloud my judgment, affect my subsequent interactions with my participants and further data collection and analysis. I noted for example my inclinations and disinclinations towards particular students and how this might come through in my interactions with them. Further, I examined my criticisms of practices and the assumptions and interpretations that resulted. I constantly evaluated my relationship with my participants to keep things on a neutral basis.

Throughout the period of fieldwork, I was mindful that my participation might cause me to lose a sense of objectivity and the etic perspective. I safeguarded against the dangers associated with 'going native' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:87) by regulating my interactions with participants and cleared my mind of their 'reality' by spending time with family and friends. I limited my observation in the kitchens to five days a week at TVC and once a week at HS. Detaching myself from their lived worlds provided me with the much-needed distance for reflection.

Although I attempted to reduce observer effects due to my personal involvement as much as I could, it was perhaps 'disciplined subjectivity' (Erickson 1984:61) rather than objectivity that I could hope for because after all, how could I (my thoughts, my biases, my beliefs, my *self*) have been uninvolved during fieldwork when I was at the various sites and interacting with the people involved almost every day for six months? Erickson puts the point across well:

It was *I* who was there doing fieldwork ... My fundamental assumptions and prejudices are part of my *me*. I cannot leave them home when I enter a site. I must study the place as *me*. (Erickson 1984:60, emphasis in original)

Rather than denying the 'me' being in the research and taking the desirable goal to be an impossible 'disembodied objectivity' (ibid.), Erickson advocates that researchers should 'make explicit to [the reader] the point of view brought to the site and its evolution while [the researcher] was there, as well as the point of view with which [the researcher] left'. In the relevant sections of the thesis, I have attempted to be as clear and transparent as possible about my views, personal reactions, decisions and involvement in the research sites and with my participants.

Participant selection

Another threat to validity lies in the selection of participants, which can be influenced by the researcher's personal preferences and prejudices (LeCompte and Goetz 1982:48). This can be managed by seeking and maintaining a diversity of participants (ibid.). Although I had personal inclinations towards certain individuals and dislike for others which I documented in my research diary, I continued to seek out those to whom I had little interest in in order to get a range of data from different participants. The selection of participants is described in Section 3.1.4 (my main informant Max) and Appendix 5.

Spurious conclusions

Lastly, LeCompte and Goetz (1982) state that validity can be threatened by spurious conclusions which could be guarded against by searching for 'negative instances of tentatively postulated relationships and disconfirming evidence for emergent constructs' (1982:50) or 'negative evidence' (Richards 2003:287). Agar (2006) suggests looking for evidence that what I think is going on is in fact not. I understand this to mean making decidedly conscious attempts to 'falsify' my interpretations as well as to seek out anomalies in the data and consider how they relate to my interpretations. This was seriously pursued in data analysis.

3.5.3 Sincerity

According to Tracy (2010:842), sincerity can be achieved through self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency and data auditing. Self-reflexivity refers to being honest and authentic to one's self, one's research and one's audience, and transparency refers to being honest about the research process. The writer notes that while self-reflexivity and transparency can be told, to a larger extent, both are better shown. She suggests weaving one's reactions or reflexive considerations of self-as-instrument throughout the research report.

I hope that in various ways including explaining my decisions and procedures in the research process, laying bare and in detail my process of data analysis, being frank about my interactions with my participants, and acknowledging my personal limitations and those of this research, I have conveyed to my reader my belief in sincerity and a self-reflexive and transparent approach in the entire research process. This leads us to the final section of this chapter – dealing with ethical issues in this research.

3.6 Ethics

Being a participant observer raises a number of ethical issues, not least because it involves other individuals who became vulnerable through revealing their thoughts, words and actions to me whenever I was in their presence. And it is in the nature of ethnography and participant observation that I was in their presence a lot at college and the placement kitchens. In this section, I discuss the ethical issues in my research under two broad headings which Guillemin and Gillam suggest are the major dimensions of ethics in qualitative research: ‘procedural ethics’ and ‘ethics in practice’ (2004:263). ‘Procedural ethics’ concerns approval from a relevant ethics committee to undertake research involving humans and ‘ethics in practice’ refers to the ‘everyday ethical issues that arise in the doing of research’ (ibid.).

3.6.1 Procedural ethics

As part of procedural ethics, I submitted an ethical approval application and received approval from the Graduate Progress Committee at my university to carry out my research prior to starting my fieldwork. In the application form, I answered questions on obtaining relevant permissions at the fieldwork sites, having respect for participants’ rights and dignity, maintaining confidentiality, obtaining participants’ consent, storing and protecting data, and my plans for dealing with possible ethical dilemmas that might arise in the course

of the study. Obtaining ethical approval to carry out my research gave me confidence to present myself as a credible researcher who had the backing of my university during my fieldwork and also led me to reflect on the ethical questions I had answered. Two of these questions concern informed consent and maintaining confidentiality.

Informed consent

The principle of informed consent refers to people giving their consent to participate in research on the basis of having sufficiently full information about it for their decision about whether to take part and it also requires that they consent freely and have the choice to withdraw without adverse consequences (Crow et al. 2006). However, the nature of ethnographic work is sometimes such that at the initial point of gaining access, 'an ethnographer often does not know what will be involved, certainly not in any detail; even less, what the consequences are likely to be' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:210).

In my case, while I did not have full details of my research at the start, I had a general idea of the nature and purpose of my study, the duration of my fieldwork, the methods of data collection and how the data will be used. These fundamental aspects of the study did not change throughout the fieldwork; and while there may have been small adjustments in the process of the research, these did not have any effect on the information I gave to college administrators, placement managers and students at the start.

The details of my research were provided to the relevant 'gatekeepers' (Silverman 2010:203) at the college and placement kitchens where I carried out data collection. In the course of my fieldwork, I shared findings with the director of the college and the section head at their request. In addition to formal permission from gatekeepers, it felt necessary that the students themselves were similarly informed and consented to participation so that they were 'participants' rather than 'subjects' (Guillemin and Gillam 2004:271). I

discussed this with the section head of the course and it was arranged that at the start of the first lesson of the term, I would explain my project to the students.

At this session, I gave the students details of my research, the demands on them if they participated, how confidentiality would be maintained and any possible risks and benefits of their participation in the study. I stressed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way. I told them they did not have to agree to participate straightaway and they could tell me whether they would at a later time, and gave them my contact details in case they had questions.

Since they did not have any experience in research, I explained what my role as a researcher would be and what a participant observer might be expected to see, hear or do. I told them that as I was trying to understand their lives and experiences, when such information was made available to me, it would become data for my research. I acknowledged that it might be stressful for them to be observed and for what they said to be noted but suggested that the data generated could potentially be useful in vocational training programmes and they would have played an important role in enabling this to happen.

Following this, I provided them with an information sheet (Appendix 3) and distributed the consent forms I had prepared (Appendix 4), requesting that they signed and returned them to me when they have decided whether to participate. The consent forms were never returned to me although the students seemed willing to participate in the research – making time for meeting me and granting me audio-recorded interviews. When I casually asked a number of students for the consent forms, a few told me they had misplaced the forms and others promised to sign and return them but they never did. I also received responses such as ‘can don’t sign [the form]?’ and ‘can don’t be so formal?’ Sensing their

reluctance, I decided not to push the issue for fear of jeopardising my developing relationships with them.

Confidentiality

A second ethical issue concerns maintaining confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to managing private information 'that has been communicated in trust of confidence, such that disclosure would or could incur particular prejudice' (Giordano et al. 2007:264). Walford (2005:85) points out that complete confidentiality is unrealistic since the researcher's job is essentially to generate information from respondents and after due analysis, pass this on to others.

Anonymity is one way of protecting confidentiality (Wiles et al. 2008:417). It refers to not naming the person or research site involved and 'in research, it is usually extended to mean that we do not include information about any individual or research site that will enable that individual or research site to be identified by others' (Walford 2005:84). The widespread use of anonymity in social research has made it the 'default option' (Walford 2005:85) and the 'ethical norm' (Tilley and Woodthorpe 2011:199). However, there is much debate about whether this should continue to be so (Tilley and Woodthorpe 2011, Walford 2005, Nespor 2000). Moreover Walford (2005) has illustrated with examples from published research that it may simply not be possible to hide the identity of the school or individuals involved because in an ethnographic study, the researcher would be spending an extended period of time at the site and many people would come to know about the research and the researcher's identity.

The particular challenge raised by confidentiality in my study concerns whether it would be possible to anonymise the identity of the college: the college falls under the aegis of the only national provider of vocational courses in the local context and although there are

three separately-located and individually-governed colleges, only one of these colleges offers the culinary course followed in this study. One could easily search on the Internet for the name of the provider of these courses and zero in on the college in question by locating the site for the culinary courses. Moreover, one of the aims of this research is to make a foray into the highly successful but under-researched vocational sector in the local context and a description of this state of affairs necessarily gives away the identity of the college.

Naming the college and the course enables contextualisation and better understanding of the situation. As this is my purpose, being open about the college and course would simply be for descriptive purposes. Since it is not within the focus of this study to uncover malpractice or mismanagement, or to judge and evaluate the college or its lecturers, there is also no reason to venture beyond this descriptive purpose. Nonetheless, I am aware of the possibility of risks to the site and harm to individuals associated with it even if I do not perceive them myself. The views of college administrators and relevant individuals will be sought if I intend to publish parts of this research that might identify them. Other research sites, namely the placement kitchens, have been anonymised.

A related issue concerns anonymising the identities of my participants. In cases where data may distinctly identify research participants, researchers have changed key characteristics of individuals if this does not compromise the integrity of the data (Wiles et al. 2008:423). I am uncomfortable with this practice because given my lack of experience with research, it may be difficult to judge the impact of these decisions on the research: it could alter or destroy the original meaning of the data (Kaiser 2009:1635) and call into question issues of transparency (Wiles et al. 2008:426) and trustworthiness (Baez 2002:40).

Although respondents may dislike its use (Corden and Sainsbury 2007:105) and they are sometimes inadequate to disguise the identities of participants (Kaiser 2009), pseudonyms are often used to anonymise the identities of participants. In this research, I have followed

the conventional practice and used pseudonyms for all my participants, in the hope that even if I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality, their identities may still be protected as far as possible.

3.6.2 Ethics in practice

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggest that a second major dimension of ethics in qualitative research is 'ethics in practice' or the 'everyday ethical issues that arise in the doing of research' (2004:263). They rightly observe that procedural ethics do not 'help you when you are in the field and difficult, unexpected situations arise, or when information is revealed that suggests you or your participants are at risk' (2004:273). The question raised by the writers is, what approach or decision should we take in those 'ethically important moments' (2004:265) when these have ethical ramifications, such as when participants disclose certain information or become unexpectedly emotional?

The writers propose that the concept of reflexivity could inform our approach to ethically important moments and contribute to ethical research practice (2004:277). Stating that reflexivity is an 'active, ongoing process that saturates every stage of the research' (2004:274), the writers explain the concept as follows:

Being reflexive about research practice means a number of things: first, an acknowledgement of microethics, that is, of the ethical dimensions of ordinary, everyday research practice; second, sensitivity to what we call the "ethically important moments" in research practice, in all of their particularities; and third, having or being able to develop a means of addressing and responding to ethical concerns if and when they arise in the research. (Guillemin and Gillam 2004:274)

In practice, a reflexive research process would involve a continuous process of critically scrutinising and interpreting our research aims and methods, the data, research context, our participants and ourselves (2004:275). This would mean asking questions to do with ethical appropriateness and whether we have respected the autonomy, dignity and privacy

of our participants, as well as considered the risks and harm to our participants for failing to do so (ibid.).

Guillemin and Gillam's approach recommends a critical examination of the impact we and our research have on the people we are researching and proposes that we respond sensitively and responsibly to it. I am grateful to have been passed Guillemin and Gillam's paper by my supervisor prior to starting my fieldwork. The concept of reflexivity has served as a useful reminder and helpful guide to my personal conduct and interactions with my participants throughout the research.

Perhaps it was in the spirit of reflexivity that I grappled constantly with the issue of 'exploitation' in doing this research. As Hammersley and Atkinson note, it is sometimes claimed that research involves exploitation of the research participants: 'that people supply the information which is used by the researcher and yet get little or nothing in return' (2007:217). They state that while there were many recommendations to remedy this issue (such as researchers giving something back whether in services or payment or empowering research participants by involving them in the research process), these do not always remove the problem and are controversial in themselves (2007:218).

Hatfield offers a perspective that sees exploitation as 'inherent to daily life' and 'inherent to the art [of fieldwork]' (1973:26). He argues that exploitation applies as much in the direction of those one researches as the researchers themselves. As a stranger to the community they study, researchers are forced into roles people ascribe to them and have to negotiate the identities thus ascribed, sometimes with little to gain in data and much to lose if they fall short of the expectations tied to these identities. The exploited researcher's position is aggravated by the paradox in which the researcher attempts to be a 'perfect research machine, posing as a human being and at the same time be truly human' (1973:25).

To some extent, I find myself relating to the examples Hatfield (1973) cites. As it happened, I was extremely conscious and careful about how I handled my relationships with participants. I worried about whether I was exploiting them, whether they thought I was doing so and what I could do to minimise their feeling this way if they did. I agonised over the authenticity of my friendship with them and harassed myself over the impact on them of this brief but intense friendship for the purposes of my research. I found myself constantly evaluating how much familiarity and closeness I would/should allow to develop so that they would not feel too attached and then abandoned when I left the field.

Troubled by such concerns, I felt the least I could do was be a friend to them in every way possible and thus expended much personal time, effort and money in doing so. I helped them with their assignments and coached them for the examinations, staying back after lessons and revising their work with them on the phone over the weekends. I guided them through their final-year PowerPoint presentations and written reports, and edited the finished products before their submission. I gave them small gifts whenever there was an occasion (Christmas, birthdays) or a reason (when I left the field), not wanting them to feel patronised or that I was paying them for data. I presented myself as approachable, friendly and supportive, and made myself available to them via email, phone calls and text messages as well as on Facebook.

With a few students who had difficulty managing their work placements, I made extra effort to encourage and help them, calling one student daily at 7 in the morning to wake her up for work, paying regular visits to another student's placement kitchen to build relationships with kitchen workers and to help him 'fit in' when he had trouble doing so, and mediating between a student and her employer when the latter threatened to sack her. I visited a student who had broken his leg and, along with a student I had brought along, was one of his only two visitors.

In interactions with the students, I kept asking myself questions such as 'How are they feeling about this?', 'How is what I'm saying/going to say going to be interpreted by them?', 'Should I say/do something?', 'How would I deal with X if it happens/does not happen?', 'What can I say/do to make them feel better?', 'Should I step in here?', 'Who else needs to know?'. Now that I have left the field, I have kept in contact with them via text and Facebook messages, and am trying to maintain the friendships made. Basically, I made every effort to be 'the perfect human being', on top of trying to carry out my fieldwork competently and professionally, and as a result was locked into the fate of the tragic anthropologist:

But the anthropologist, determined to play a role of perfect machine and man, hoping to soar above the complexities of being human by not playing the game [of exploitation inherent to daily life], suffers the consequences of his perfection, like Alceste. (Hatfield 1973:26)

Perhaps it is also in the spirit of reflexivity that I asked myself at one point whether I was not also simply genuinely concerned for their well-being. Which then made me wonder if I was trying to convince myself that I was not just being their friend for research purposes. Then, either way, did it matter? Although taking a reflexive approach introduces all sorts of complexities and in truth, in the frustrating process that research sometimes is, drove me up the wall with only more questions for company, I believe I would have much regret had I taken a less considered approach. The reflexive approach matched my desire to be responsible to my participants and to treat them with dignity and respect. It resonated and still does with me as a researcher and an individual.

3.7 Summary

In this chapter, I described the research context by providing a brief historical overview of VET in Singapore and information on the vocational college, course and placement kitchens. I also explained my focus on data from the placement kitchens and on Max whilst

complementing data on the latter with data from other research participants. Following that, I discussed the research tradition in which the current study is positioned, specifically the rationale for using an ethnographic approach and combining it with linguistic data to produce a linguistic ethnography. I explained my methods of data collection and described the process of data analysis. I also addressed issues of validity and reliability and discussed the ethical issues in this research. The following chapter provides an introduction to the world of the placement kitchen. It is followed by three chapters presenting the analysis of trainee experience in that world.

10.30am at Kaven's. We step into the kitchen and I wondered if the day would be more eventful than the previous one. Yesterday was Max's first day in the kitchen and he found it disappointing. Eager to start working, he turned up early but ended up in a corner watching the chefs at work for the entire shift. Chef de partie Toh is already here. The stoves and wood-fired oven have been switched on. Toh gets pots and pans out and places them on the stoves. He heats up three pots of soups and five sauces. He mixes the mashed potatoes. He doesn't say a word to us. We stand in a corner and watch. Twenty minutes later, demi chef Samy arrives, smiles to us and enters the walk-in chiller. When vegetables are ordered, they usually arrive around this time but none have been ordered today. Samy comes out of the chiller with a bag of broccoli and tells Max to cut them. Samy removes two other bags of garlic and onions, and tells Max to cut them as well. Max takes a chopping board and a knife, and starts working on the vegetables. Samy moves briskly around the kitchen checking on the ingredients. Commis cook Leonard comes into the kitchen for the baby potatoes baking in the oven. He takes the potatoes and a tub of sauce, and leaves the kitchen. Five minutes before lunch service begins, Toh completes his preparations and leaves the kitchen for a smoke break. Samy is also ready and stands by the Micros machine waiting. It's odd that no one speaks. I'm not sure if I should break the ice but decide in the end to keep quiet and see what happens. Max continues to cut the vegetables in silence (Abstracted from fieldnotes, Kaven's, 121003).

12pm at Joai Asian. Lunch service begins. Orders start arriving through the Micros machine. The kitchen is short of two cooks today and Max hopes he'll get to cook at the Asian section. He goes and stands beside demi chef Liong at the Asian section and watches as the latter cooks a prawn noodle soup. Twenty minutes later, sous chef Peter calls Max over to the Western section. The kitchen starts to experience a rush; the Micros machine relentlessly churns out order after order. Chef de partie Weng from Kaven's comes over and cooks at the fry station. Max puts together the ingredients for his dishes. Peter calls out an endless stream of orders, checks with the cooks on ongoing orders and quickly tastes and garnishes the dishes before putting them out to be served. Commis cook Henry is working the deep-fry station and soups. I'm trying to think what I can do to help. The atmosphere is tense; everyone is looking serious and focused on their work. At the stoves, hands move quickly, opening and closing drawers, grabbing ingredients, splashing condiments into pans and woks. A swift turn of the body from station to hot pass, a dish delivered, another turn back to the stoves and more frying. No one talks. The only voice is Peter's calling out orders and giving instructions. At the Asian section, I'm putting ingredients together for Liong's dishes. The latter is frying dish after dish, moving wok and ladle constantly for the past half an hour but he is struggling to keep up with the orders. Max comes over and picks up a bowl of ingredients. He switches on a stove and picks up a plate of ingredients. Liong gives him instructions on ingredients and condiments to

add. Max goes on to cook several orders in this manner. As suddenly as it started, the tempo drops. It's 1.30pm and the orders start to slow down. Peter tells Max to cut the vegetables. Max spends the next 1.5 hours cutting carrots, broccoli, spring onion, spinach and kai lan (Abstracted from fieldnotes, Joai Asian, 121022).

2pm at Maurie's. After the rush, sous chef Eric is looking visibly relaxed. We are standing around waiting for 'last orders' before the kitchen closes. He tells Max to cut slices of cheese and to pack them into bags. He explains to us that there are more than 300 types of cheese and describes the texture and taste of different Parmesan cheeses. The kitchen starts to pack up for the end of lunch shift. Max begins to slice the cheese and when he finishes, we leave for our split-shift break. We will be back again in four hours (Abstracted from fieldnotes, Maurie's 121123).

6pm at Prome. We're back from the split-shift break. Max goes to Sonny and peels onions with him. Sonny doesn't say anything. Ryan is here too and he is turning potatoes. Udu is checking his sauces and heating them up. Done with the onions, Max puts them away and goes to stand by the Micros machine. An order for fish and chips comes in. Max cooks it and brings it to the service counter. He goes to Udu who is plucking the stalks off the red chilli and works with him on the task. They work in silence. Twenty minutes later, the orders start to pour in. Max is at the deep-fryer cooking fish and chips, and takes turns with Joe making the pizzas. He is also cooking the wildly popular satay orders. He looks like he is keeping up with the pace. Ryan is frying order after order of pasta. He mistakenly makes a spaghetti order instead of a fettuccini and swears. Joe cooks the Asian noodle dishes. Udu works frenziedly at the Indian section where many orders were received. Muthu the sous chef who was expediting in Shane's absence tells me to take over as he goes to help Udu out. Udu and Muthu are in a flurry with their orders and at one stage there were 10 tables waiting for their Indian dishes. Every few minutes, Ryan, Max and Joe bring me their orders. I set them aside and as soon as the Indian dishes are ready, hurry the servers to get them out. Meanwhile the orders come in endlessly and servers appear at the service table asking for their tables. We are all tense. I'm trying to keep up. The rush lasts for a good part of two hours and finally drops off. Muthu relaxes and makes me a naan. Ryan tells Max to cut the parma ham at the garde manger (Abstracted from fieldnotes, Prome, 130118).

Kitchen life for trainees was in some ways similar to that of kitchen workers and in other ways different. Some aspects of kitchen work were a common experience. Kitchens were hot, noisy, cramped and extremely busy; the work environment was thoroughly uncomfortable. Personal sacrifices were part and parcel of the job; the hours were long and shiftwork meant weekends and public holidays were spent in the kitchens. Work itself was

decidedly physical and enervating, often laborious and repetitive and, at times, highly compressed and stressful.

Other aspects of kitchen life were different for trainees and workers. Whilst carrying out kitchen work or simply to pass the time during slow periods, workers made small talk with one another. Trainees often worked alone and in silence: they worked on tasks by themselves in a spot in the kitchen for hours at a stretch, isolated from other workers and the sea of activity around them. At times they were explicitly excluded from participation, leading one trainee to comment that ‘they [workers] do their own thing one ley’.

In what follows, I describe the work setting of the kitchens. The discussion begins with an overall description of the kitchens to provide background information on the working environment. This is followed by a discussion of some aspects of life in the kitchens for the trainees.

4.1 Service and production kitchens

A total of nine kitchens made up the working environment of the trainees at TVC, my main research site. A social club located near the city’s upmarket shopping district, TVC had a membership of slightly more than 7000 which kept the kitchens busy throughout the week during the à la carte lunch and dinner service as well as pre-booked private dining events.

The nine kitchens may be broadly divided into service and production kitchens. Service kitchens (Kaven’s, Joai Asian, Maurie’s, Esbar and Prome) cooked meals during à la carte service and dining events. Production kitchens (the garde manger, butchery, patisserie and hot production) assisted in other aspects of food production e.g. the butchery received, cut, portioned and distributed meats and seafood to the service kitchens and the patisserie made the breads, pastries, cakes and desserts served in those kitchens. The theme and

menu, physical size as well as number of staff and stations in the kitchens are summarised in Table 4.1.

	Kitchen	Theme and menu	Size of kitchen	No. of workers	Stations/Sections
1	Kaven's	Semi-formal dining (Western grills, pastas and pizza)	Small	3	Grill Fry Pizza
2	Joai Asian	Semi-formal dining (local Asian dishes; Western soups and stews; fish and chips)	Small	7	Asian cooking Fry
3	Maurie's	Fine dining (including private dinner events)	Small	3	Grill Fry
4	Esbar	Sports bar (snacks, sandwiches and salads)	Small	3	Fry Pantry
5	Prome	Casual dining (Western, Indian and local Asian dishes)	Large	15	Indian cooking Asian cooking Grill Fry Pizza Pantry
6	Garde manger	Cold dishes (appetisers, sandwiches, salads etc)	Medium	7	Production Service
7	Butchery	Received, cut, portioned and distributed meats and seafood	Medium	2	Meats Seafood
8	Patisserie	Pastries, cakes, desserts, breads	Medium	6	Pastry Baking
9	Hot Production	Soups and sauces	Small	2	Hot cooking

Table 4.1 Characteristics of the kitchens at TVC

The trainees were scheduled to work one to three weeks at a stretch in each kitchen before moving on to the next and thus had the experience of working in both service and production kitchens. Over the six-month period of placement, they returned to several kitchens and spent more time in some kitchens than others.

4.2 Western recipes and techniques

Except for the Asian sections in Joai Asian and Prome, the service kitchens served predominantly Western cuisine. Gabriel, who did his work placement at a Western-themed food establishment, explained some of the differences between Western and Asian cooking and the initial challenges:

'[Western cooking was a] whole different thing. Because [at college] Asian wat, then this one Western. Then the way they sauté also different. The way like, they (handle) the wok, also different. First day, second day, first week la, very confusing la, very very tough la, then slowly now, like I got used to it already lor.' (INT, Gabriel, 121210)

At the TVC, whilst there were a few opportunities for trainees to do Asian cooking in the Joai Asian and Prome kitchens, most of the trainees' work involved Western cooking. Trained in Asian cooking at college, the trainees had to learn Western-based recipes and ingredients, methods of cooking and kitchen techniques during their placement.

4.3 Kitchen hierarchy

I was walking towards Prome when Chris [a demi chef in that kitchen], who was bending over to take something, suddenly froze in action. Puzzled by this, I stopped in my tracks and as Chris slowly raised his head, I said 'Hullo!' cheerily. But Chris, typically loud and jovial, was white in the face and looked shocked to see me. Very quickly though, relief washes over him and he breaks into laughter, exclaiming: 'Whoa, don't frighten me ley! Black trousers leh! If black trousers sees me, won't I be dead!' Then I realised what just happened: Chris was making his lunch with ingredients from the kitchen. (RD, 121116)

Like clock-in timesheets and 'Reserved' car park places, black trousers and checkered trousers indexed the hierarchy in the kitchens. Chris froze mid-action because he thought he had been found out by someone higher up in the hierarchy for using ingredients in the kitchens to cook his own meals. These individuals were referred to as 'management-level' chefs and were dressed in a white chef's jacket and black trousers. With his body half-bent over, he spotted my black trousers (I dressed in black trousers as I didn't own any checkered ones) and assumed the worst.

The highest positions at TVC were the executive chef and executive sous chef who oversaw the entire kitchen operations. The next positions were sous chefs who headed the kitchens (the exceptions were Kaven's and Esbar which were headed by chefs de partie). Assisting the sous chefs were junior sous chefs and only two kitchens had these positions. Individuals in these four positions were management-level chefs and their attire reflected this status.

Below them were workers referred to as the 'rank-and-file' and, in descending order, they were the chefs de partie, demi chefs and commis cooks. These workers also had on white chef's jackets but instead of black trousers, theirs were checkered. Trainees were at the bottom of this hierarchy and they were similarly attired. Like the non-management level workers, they also wore an apron around the waist.

In addition to the explicit low ranking indicated by their attire, trainees were symbolically positioned below even the lowest of workers in the tasks assigned to them and the fact that they received orders from almost anyone in the kitchens and had to carry them out. Workers ranging from sous chefs to commis cooks gave orders to trainees. These orders were often for simple and low-status kitchen tasks, typically carried out by those of low social ranking in the kitchens (Whyte 1948:34-38). In Extract 4.1, Max was instructed by workers of three different ranks to work on cutting tasks:

Extract 4.1

Shi Kai [chef de partie] tells Max to slice a box of around 30 tomatoes and place them on a tray in the chiller. Dominic [demi chef] comes over with a small metal dish and tells Max to halve the cherry tomatoes and place them in the dish. Half an hour later, Henry [commis cook] tells Max to slice the lontong (Malay rice cakes). (FN, Joai Asian, 121018)

Moreover tasks were also often trivial and 'Boy Friday' in nature. In Extract 4.2, commis cook Aunty Siew Lan instructed Max to take a tray of fruits to the staff café:

Extract 4.2

Max is walking around the kitchen and observing what the other cooks were doing. Aunty Siew Lan passes him a tray of fruits and tells him to take it to the staff café. (FN, Garde manger, 121101)

In addition to their uniforms which marked out their low status, trainees were also positioned low in the hierarchy in the tasks assigned to them and the fact that just about every kitchen worker directed the trainees and was comfortable in doing so, even those who did not regularly interact with them (thus having no basis to be confident of trainees' obligation to comply). Workers directed downwards: lower-ranked individuals did not direct higher-ranked ones and certainly never for 'Boy Friday' tasks. Trainees who were at the bottom of the hierarchy directed no one. On their part, trainees acknowledged the differential statuses and carried out the orders.

4.4 Participation opportunities

The service kitchens varied in the opportunities provided to trainees to participate in service work i.e. cooking and plating orders to be served, and these opportunities also varied among the trainees themselves. In some kitchens and at certain periods during a shift, participation was limited and trainees assumed the role of observer, watching as workers worked. In most kitchens the tasks assigned to trainees prior to lunch/dinner service were time-consuming and as trainees worked on these tasks, they did not participate in service. One of these routine tasks was ingredient preparation which mainly involved processing large quantities of vegetables; cutting, peeling and carving them often saw trainees working on the tasks throughout the entire shift.

When they participated in service work, the extent of their involvement varied among the kitchens. They might cook throughout service or only a few orders now and then. They might also be limited to plating orders instead of cooking. Or they might do simple cooking such as deep-frying fish fillets and chips instead of the relatively more complex orders.

These variable opportunities also differed among trainees; some trainees worked more on ingredient preparation while others did more cooking in the same kitchen.

There was less variation in their participation in the production kitchens. They carried out the same daily routines such as cutting pumpkins in the garde manger and filleting chickens in the butchery. They were also typically involved in preparing pre-booked specially-ordered items and worked alongside workers on these tasks.

4.5 Physical nature of work

It seems unimaginative to state that the nature of kitchen work was physical but the point should nonetheless be made in a description of trainee experience in the kitchens. The physical nature of work in part gave rise to the kinds of actions produced (e.g. physical actions) and those withheld (e.g. verbal actions) by trainees in this setting.

The physical nature of kitchen work is evident everywhere one looked. Kitchen tasks invariably involved *doing*. Workers stirred sauces and soups. At open counters, they cut, peeled and carved vegetables. They chopped chickens and ducks, shelled prawns and eggs, mashed potatoes in the processor. Others pushed trolleys filled with the day's deliveries around the kitchens and unloaded the items in cabinets and chillers. During service, they cooked orders, hefted woks, tossed ingredients and garnished dishes. Accordingly, the work that trainees did, some of which included those just mentioned, required their physical actions. Whether in processing ingredients or cooking orders, their physical actions were what mattered. These actions prompted occasional interventions to set right and were commented on, evaluated and validated by workers. The emphasis on physical actions in kitchen work constructed the meaning of 'working' in this setting. Consequently when trainees were not engaged in physical, doing-type actions, they have been construed by workers as not working and were perceived negatively.

4.6 Social interactions

By and large, trainees had few social interactions at work. Whilst workers often engaged in small talk among themselves throughout the working day, their interactions with trainees were overwhelmingly focused on task accomplishment. Workers directed trainees to tasks and instructed them on how to carry out those tasks. These interactions were initiated by workers and elicited trainees' physical actions rather than their verbal ones. The trainees' response in these interactions was to physically perform the elicited actions.

In carrying out the tasks, trainees often worked alone for long stretches at a time and hardly interacted with other workers. Save for instructional interactions, trainees spent much of their working day in a mostly-silent world of their own. Interactions which were not focused on tasks and those that involved extensive talk and social chit-chat were rare. In the case of my main informant Max, these interactions occurred with only a handful of workers.

4.7 Languages spoken

One of the first things an observer notices is that hardly any English is used in the kitchens. The following is excerpted from an email message I wrote to my supervisor two weeks after starting fieldwork in the kitchens:

One of the first things I noticed is that hardly any English is used in the kitchens. It is hardly used in the Asian sections of kitchens (Joai Asian and Prome) and interestingly, also hardly used in the Western-based kitchens. So you have chefs who are trained in Western cuisine and who effortlessly whip up European dishes but who do not use English. I'm not sure why I think this sounds like some kind of contradiction - why should they be able to speak English at all? So for example, with the chefs doing Western cuisine, you might hear an entire sentence in Mandarin but now and then, there's a 'thyme', 'rosemary', 'tagliatelle', 'compote', 'confit' etc. in there somewhere; 'slam' by the way is always in English so again, one entire clause in one of the Chinese languages, usually prefaced by a bunch of Hokkien profanities (profanities are typically expressed in Hokkien here), and then 'slam'. (Email correspondence, 121012)

Workers could in fact speak English but many did not do so. Instead of English, the languages used among workers were Hokkien, Cantonese and Mandarin. Most of the workers were Malaysian or Singaporean Chinese. Among the Malaysian workers, Cantonese was the language of choice and among the Singaporeans, Hokkien. Mandarin was commonly used as it was spoken and understood by almost everyone.

In terms of hierarchy, the executive chef and executive sous chef used English the most – when speaking to me and the trainees or when they gave instructions or began conversations with workers. Sometimes they code-switched between English and either Hokkien or Mandarin; they might also speak in Hokkien or Mandarin entirely. Workers in the ranks below these preferred the Chinese languages.

Nonetheless English was often used with people outside the kitchen such as when kitchen workers communicated with service staff who were mostly of Filipino, Malay and Indian descent and who did not speak any of the Chinese languages.

In their interactions with trainees, all except two workers used Mandarin and as is common in Singapore, sometimes code-switched between Mandarin and English. The two workers who did not use Mandarin, namely Samy and Shankar, conducted their interactions with trainees in English. This linguistic situation which involved Mandarin, English and code-switching posed no issues with trainees as they were all bilingual speakers of Mandarin and English. In fact the more common use of Mandarin matched their preferred language in conversations among themselves and with me.

4.8 Time

Work-days in the service and production kitchens were structured differently. In service kitchens, the working day of workers and that of trainees was structured by segments of time or events such as preparations, service, ‘closing’ and banquets (Fine 1996b:60;

Marshall 1986:40). In production kitchens on the other hand, time was not similarly structured by these events as the work involved routine preparation of items on a daily or weekly basis.

4.8.1 A typical day in the service kitchens

Except for Esbar, work in the service kitchens was divided into two four-hour shifts. Depending on the kitchen, shifts began up to an hour before service and ended half an hour or so after the stipulated time for the last order.

Each lunch shift began with preparation work. This involved heating up soups, sauces, mashed potatoes and side vegetables, peeling and cutting vegetables, checking and replenishing ingredients as well as collecting fresh produce and dried stores from the receiving department.

Trainees participated extensively in this work. Upon reporting to the kitchens, their first task was to collect the day's deliveries from the receiving department. With a trolley and a checklist, they took the escalator to the ground floor and proceeded through dimly-lit and narrow corridors towards the receiving department, occasionally meeting workers from other kitchens along the way and exchanging greetings. Deliveries for each kitchen have been sorted and organised on shelves at the receiving department. Nancy, the stern-looking but friendly receiving officer, sometimes engaged in small talk with them and reminded them to only take items from shelves labelled with the kitchen they were collecting items for. Trainees ticked items off their checklist and loaded them on their trolleys.

Returning to the kitchens, they removed bags of vegetables, placed them at the cutting station and put away the other items in chillers around the kitchens. Following this, they began the task of processing the vegetables and did other ad-hoc preparation work

assigned by workers. As they worked, workers approached them to provide instruction on techniques and procedures.

When service began, trainees still involved in preparation work took no part in service work. Whilst workers cooked orders at the stoves, trainees continued working on the vegetables at the cutting station. Upon completion of the duties and when participation in service was allowed, trainees plated orders, did simple duties (e.g. scooping soup into bowls) or cooked orders, the last initially guided by workers who provided step-by-step instructions and subsequently performed by trainees independently. Otherwise, they carried out other tasks assigned to them or stood by the side of workers and watched. At the close of service, they worked with workers to put away ingredients and collected plates, bowls and other utensils for washing by the stewards.

Like the workers, trainees had a four-hour split-shift break following the lunch shift. Kyle usually had prior plans and Justin would take a nap in the lounge. Stanley, Vincent and Max typically left TVC premises for meals and coffee at the nearby shopping malls. They were frequently joined by Shane, the sous chef at Prome who was their former lecturer at college, and occasionally by Eric and Mei, the sous chef and demi chef at Maurie's respectively. Conversational topics centred on complaints about work and kitchen workers, often prompted by Shane and Eric. The trainees joined in. When conversation dried up, they whiled away the time on their mobile devices – texting, watching online video clips, surfing the Internet for news, checking and making posts on social media accounts etc.

Returning to the kitchens for the dinner shift, trainees joined workers in setting up work stations, replenishing ingredients in the working chillers and processing ingredients that were running out in storage. As service began, if trainees were not assigned to work on any task, they stood with workers and waited for orders to come through the Micros machine. In lull periods between orders or on slow evenings, trainees joined workers in ingredient

preparation. In some kitchens they chatted with workers or joined in on ongoing conversations between workers and me. Slow evenings also saw workers start to do 'closing' work early and trainees joined in this activity. They packed ingredients away and wiped down work surfaces. When service closed, they did a final round of closing work before leaving the kitchens.

4.8.2 A typical day in the production kitchens

Working days in the production kitchens (butchery, hot production, garde manger and patisserie) were not regulated by events such as lunch and dinner service. Except for the garde manger, shifts were a straight nine hours with an hour's break midway through the shift. Work was routine and carried out continually.

At the butchery, the trainees' first task in a shift was to fillet chickens and they worked on this for the most part of the morning. As they were not allowed to work on other meats or seafood, they spent the rest of the shift watching the butchers at work.

At the hot production kitchen, trainees processed vegetables and joined workers in cooking sauces and soups which were made on a daily basis and stored in the chiller until they were required by the service kitchens. As large quantities needed to be prepared and there were not enough workers for the workload, there was little idle time in this kitchen. Trainees worked alongside workers who provided instruction periodically throughout their shifts.

Like the hot production kitchen, the garde manger and patisserie also prepared items in advance and, like the butchery, work in these kitchens involved daily routines. At the garde manger, trainees prepared roasted pumpkins at the start of every shift, first cutting the fruit and marinating the pumpkin wedges before roasting them in the oven. In the patisserie, they prepared apple pies and got them ready for the service kitchens to pick them up prior to service. Following these daily routines, they were instructed by workers

on the preparation of other items. These items either varied according to the week in question (e.g. in the garde manger, the prawn salad for the buffet alternated with the apple and celery salad) or had been specially ordered by the service kitchens or for private dining events.

Although the shifts in service and production kitchens involved the same number of hours, working days in the former were felt to be longer since it involved split-shifts. These four-hour split-shift breaks (sometimes shortened by tasks that fed into the break) were technically time away from work but they were in a sense still work-time; trainees were not entirely free to spend the time any way they wished since they had to return to work at a stipulated time. Vincent and Justin preferred working in the production kitchens because of the straight shifts. Max on the other hand did not mind the split-shifts in service kitchens as he enjoyed the excitement and buzz of doing service.

4.9 Trainee life in the kitchens

In this chapter, I provided an overview of trainee life in the kitchens. The vignette that opened the chapter is a composite of extracts from my fieldnotes in the various kitchens which were put together to depict a day in the life of the trainees. To provide background information on the work environment of the kitchens, I discussed the different types of kitchens at TVC and the characteristics of the kitchens. I also presented other features of the work setting that the trainees encountered.

Although the trainees were trained in Asian culinary techniques, principles and recipes, they worked in kitchens that served predominantly Western-style dishes. This meant that trainees were being introduced not only to work but to a new world of cuisine during their work placement, and this required some adaptation on their part.

Trainees occupied the lowest positions in the kitchen hierarchy. This is indicated by their uniforms, the fact that they took orders from almost every kitchen worker and were often assigned lower-status kitchen tasks. These work arrangements were not peculiar to the trainees at TVC. Lyngsnes and Rismark observed in their study of apprentices working in restaurants that they were given 'second-rated job tasks' and 'designated apprentice tasks' (2011:170). The apprentices were also given orders by other employees and 'had little influence on what to do and how to do it' (ibid.). The writers characterised this pattern of participation as 'an executive pattern' and suggested that it presented limited learning opportunities for the apprentices.

However, although such work arrangements, as I suggested, positioned trainees lowly in the work hierarchy, they nonetheless afforded learning opportunities since trainees were often provided with instruction prior to the task, corrected by workers during their *doing* of the task or were evaluated on their work following the completion of the task. In doing these tasks, trainees had opportunities to learn how tasks should be performed. Given that many of these tasks were routine kitchen tasks, trainees appeared to be learning about the work and indeed, to work, in this setting. The following chapter provides more detail on the learning opportunities provided through doing tasks.

Work in this context was constituted by physical action and verbal interactions overwhelmingly involved eliciting trainees' physical actions. These interactions were aimed at instruction for tasks to be accomplished. Social interactions and extensive ones involving verbal exchanges were rare.

The most common language used in verbal interactions was Mandarin and this was the language used with trainees. Code-switching between Mandarin and English was common but this was not atypical of language use in Singapore. Neither the use of Mandarin nor

code-switching was observed to pose any communicative issues between workers and trainees.

Time in the service and production kitchens was structured differently and trainees' work varied according to this temporal structure and the nature of the work in each kitchen.

This chapter has provided a broad overview of trainee life in the kitchens. In the following three chapters, an analysis of their experience is presented based on the salient actions engaged in by trainees on a daily basis. The most pervasive of actions displayed in the kitchens are discussed in the following chapter, namely the actions of doing and watching.

Chapter 5 Doing and Watching

Looking around the kitchens, one invariably saw workers in the midst of a physical activity. Intermittent and brief conversations occurred but overwhelmingly, work was the focus of workers' attention and this work was conducted through embodied action. Accordingly for trainees, work involved their embodied actions. In addition to *doing*, trainees also *watched*. In this chapter, I discuss aspects of trainees' experience of doing and watching in the kitchens.

5.1 Doing

5.1.1 Doing tasks and doing Nellie's work

Trainees participated in the kitchens through the action of doing in two main ways, namely doing tasks and doing Nellie's work, and each involved different types of instruction.

Doing tasks

Trainees were assigned a range of tasks by workers ranging from sous chefs who headed the kitchens to commis cooks who were lower-positioned in the kitchen hierarchy. These tasks included trivial and ad-hoc errands (Extract 5.1) as well as routine tasks such as collecting the day's deliveries from the receiving department (Extracts 5.2 and 5.3):

Extract 5.1

Max is walking around the kitchen and observing what the other cooks were doing. Auntie Siew Lan passes him a tray of fruits and dispatches him to the staff café. (FN, Garde manger, 121101)

Extract 5.2

Henry takes Max to the receiving department downstairs to pick up the day's deliveries. Henry tells Max to load the items from the shelves onto his trolley. Henry has a checklist and he proceeds to mark off the items on it. (FN, Joai Asian, 121015)

Extract 5.3

Peter tells Max to go downstairs to collect the day's deliveries. At the receiving department, Max checks the items on his checklist and loads them on the trolley. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

Some tasks were straightforward:

Extract 5.4

Weng tells Max to weigh out 200-gm portions of fettuccine and pack them into individual bags. Max does so. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

Other tasks entailed specific requirements, procedures or techniques:

Extract 5.5

Sam tells Max to slice the baby bok choy. He grabs a bunch and shows Max how he wanted them sliced. Then he leaves Max to it. (FN, Joai Asian, 121020)

Typically when tasks were assigned, instruction was provided to the trainees. In Extract 5.6, Max was directed to replenish the noodles required for service. Following Liam's directive, Max went to the chiller, collected the noodles and filled the relevant containers. In addition to the directive, Liam instructed Max to place the new batch of noodles beneath the existing batch. This practice was the 'first in first out' rule that ensured older ingredients were used before newer ones:

Extract 5.6

Liam tells Max to replenish the noodles: 'Get the noodles'. Max goes to the chiller and removes packets of flat rice noodles, thick wheat noodles and thick egg noodles. Returning to the stoves, he puts a new batch of flat rice noodles over the existing noodles in the plastic inserts by the stove. Liam shouts from across the kitchen: 'Put the old noodles above the new ones ar.' Max does so for the other noodles. (FN, Joai Asian, 121026)

As we saw earlier in Extract 5.5, when tasks required the application of a particular technique or procedure, workers' directive was followed by a physical demonstration. Likewise in Extract 5.7, Eric directed Max to turn the carrots and provided a physical demonstration on the technique involved. Max then carried out the physical action:

Extract 5.7

Sous chef Eric tells Max to turn the baby carrots and he shows Max how to carve them into an oval shape and leaves him to it. Max starts on the task of turning the carrots. (FN, Maurie's, 121121)

In Extract 5.8, Peter demonstrated to Max the procedure for marinating the fish fillets and directed him to carry out the task, and Max did as instructed:

Extract 5.8

Peter calls Max over and shows him how to prepare the dory fillets for fish and chips orders. He marinates the fillets with pepper and salt, and squeezes lemon over them. He then coats both sides of the fillet in flour and bread crumbs. He tells Max to work on the rest of the fillets and place them in a tray in the chiller. Max does so. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

As trainees worked, their incorrect actions prompted remedial instruction from workers. In Extract 5.9, Dominic directed Max to replenish the deep-fried slices of fish in the working chiller and this involved deep-frying the fish slices in a wok of boiling-hot oil. As Max reached his forearm over the wok and was about to drop the fish slices into the wok, Dominic held his hand back to prevent the unsafe action (which might result in scalds from the hot oil). Dominic explained to Max and demonstrated to him how the task should be carried out:

Extract 5.9

The deep-fried fish slices are running out and Dominic tells Max to deep-fry more. As Max is about to drop the fish slices into the wok filled almost to the brim with hot oil, Dominic holds his hand back. He tells Max to slip the pieces in by the side of the wok instead of 'landing' them in the centre of the wok so that his hand will not be scalded by the burning-hot oil. He takes a few slices and shows Max how to do this. (FN, Joai Asian, 121018)

In Extract 5.10, as Max worked on the task, Peter noticed that Max's actions would result in unnecessary wastage. Returning to the cutting station, Peter made a brief comment on the wrong action and demonstrated the process once more:

Extract 5.10

Max cuts one carrot into strips but the strips were too thin and he discards them. Peter sees this and tells him he shouldn't be cutting it that way because that would involve much wastage. He shows Max again how to cut the strips to the size he wanted. Max works on another carrot as Peter watches. After Max is done with two carrots, Peter leaves his side. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

In doing these tasks assigned to them, trainees had opportunities to learn about kitchen work. On being assigned a task, they were provided with information on kitchen tasks that needed to be done as well as brief instructions for carrying them out. When there were specific requirements, techniques or procedures, workers physically demonstrated what was required. Finally as trainees worked on their tasks, remedial instruction was provided to correct their actions.

Doing Nellie's work

A second set of doing-type situations involved trainees doing the work of workers at specific stations and performing in the capacity of the full-timer working that station. Drawing on the on-the-job training approach known as 'Sitting with Nellie', I describe these situations as 'doing Nellie's work'. Doing Nellie's work saw trainees working at various stations and in roles such as the aboyeur, commis cook and station cook in the different kitchens. The following discussion illustrates this particular doing-type situation with examples of trainees working as station cooks.

In doing Nellie's work, trainees cooked the orders that Nellie herself would have cooked. As station cooks, they received instruction from the specific worker whose work they were doing and they worked under the worker's supervision. In Extracts 5.11 and 5.12, Max worked at the grill and fry stations which were the work stations of the sous chef at Maurie's, Eric:

Extract 5.11

Max finishes with the oranges and goes to stand with Eric at the grill station. Max cooks a number of orders as Eric provides instruction and supervises. (FN, Maurie's, 121124)

Extract 5.12

Max goes to stand beside Eric at the stoves and watches as the latter pan-fries the fish dishes. Eric then guides Max as the latter pan-fries a fish, giving him instructions as he works. (FN, Maurie's, 121127)

As Max carried out Eric's work, the latter provided instantaneous instructions and was on hand to supervise the entire activity. Similarly at Kaven's, Max carried out Weng's work at the latter's work station:

Extract 5.13

1930h: There's a mussels order. Although Weng typically does all the frying, today he's letting Max do it. He stands beside him and gives him step-by-step instructions: 'Add wine, add cream, flip, add thyme'. (FN, Kaven's, 121004)

As Max cooked the order, Weng provided instantaneous 'step-by-step' instructions. Like Eric, Weng stayed at the station right beside Max and supervised his work throughout the activity.

Moreover workers continued to provide supervision until they were confident that trainees could manage the orders on their own. Fifteen minutes after Weng guided Max on cooking the latter's first mussels order (Extract 5.13 above), another mussels order was received by the kitchen and Weng again supervised Max as the latter cooked this order:

Extract 5.14

1945h: Max goes to look at the order tickets. He takes out a packet of mussels and prepares to fry it. Weng watches as Max fries the mussels. (FN, Kaven's, 121004)

Two days later, Weng supervised Max on the same order:

Extract 5.15

There's an order for mussels. Weng asks Max to fry it. Max does so under his supervision. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

After Max had cooked a number of orders competently over the following days, Weng appeared to be confident of Max's abilities and no longer supervised him, as I noted in my fieldnotes:

Extract 5.16

Max cooked a number of menu items this evening. It's his second week here and he seems to be getting more independent with the routine tasks and competent with cooking. Weng seems to trust him to prepare the menu items with minimal, if any, supervision. (FN, Kaven's, 121008)

In doing Nellie's work, trainees learned to work by receiving instantaneous instructions and supervision throughout the work activity. This guidance was provided to guarantee an outcome that would have been produced by the full-timer working that station: instantaneous instructions and supervision ensured that the correct procedure was followed (which ingredients were required, the sequence of adding them, judgements on when the ingredients were fully cooked etc.) so that the order would be properly prepared and fit for serving. Workers provided guidance until they judged that trainees were able to work independently of their instruction.

Trainees participated in the kitchens through doing tasks and doing Nellie's work. The former involved tasks assigned to them and the latter, working at particular workers' work stations. The nature of instruction differed in the two doing-type situations. In doing tasks, trainees received information on kitchen tasks and brief instructions for carrying them out. When specific requirements, techniques or procedures were required, workers provided a physical demonstration. As trainees worked on their tasks, workers provided remedial instruction to correct their actions. Doing tasks saw trainees spending long stretches of time on their own working on the tasks. In doing Nellie's work on the other hand, trainees and workers remained beside each other and guidance continued throughout the work activity until workers judged that trainees were able to work independently of their instruction.

5.1.2 Being 'frontstage'

TVC kitchens, like most kitchens, were spatially tight environments and the physical layout was fairly open. Trainees, like all kitchen workers, worked in close proximity of other workers and in full view of them.

As trainees carried out their tasks, workers in the vicinity of their work station or who were simply passing by provided instruction. In Extract 5.17, Max was directed by Shankar to shell and arrange prawns on a plate. As Max started to shell the prawns, Seb who was working near Max came over to him and demonstrated a quicker way:

Extract 5.17

Shankar tells Max to shell the prawns and arrange them on a plate. Max puts on a pair of gloves and starts shelling the cooked prawns. Seb comes over and shows him a quicker way to shell the prawns. (FN, Garde manger, 121101)

Because of the physical proximity, workers could also 'hear' how Max was carrying out his task. In Extract 5.18, Mei was cooking at the stoves with her back to Max while the latter was cutting celery at the cutting station behind the row of shelves that separated them. Max was cutting the celery quickly and his actions with the knife created quite a racket. Mei came over to Max, pointed out the incorrect action and demonstrated the right technique for cutting the celery, adding that the right technique should not produce 'tok tok tok' sounds:

Extract 5.18

Max cuts the celery by bringing his knife down on the chopping board for each cut and his knife makes 'tok tok tok' sounds on the chopping board. Mei comes over and tells him: 'You don't cut this in this way, you know?' Max replies: 'Hmm?' Mei takes the knife from Max and shows him how to cut the celery. Instead of bringing down the knife which Max had done and thus producing the 'tok tok tok' sounds, she pulls the knife back for each cut. She tells Max: 'Not with the 'tok tok tok' sounds'. Max says 'Okay'. (FN, Maurie's, 121121)

Workers passing by Max's work station also provided instruction. In Extract 5.19, Max was working at Joai Asian and cutting vegetables at the cutting station. Weng passed by,

stopped and watched as Max worked. He made brief comments on the progress Max was making before taking the chopper from Max and demonstrating a more efficient way of dicing the tomatoes:

Extract 5.19

Peter tells Max to dice the tomatoes. As Max dices the tomatoes, Weng passes by and watches as he works. He tells Max: 'Cut faster. (You're) cutting it so slowly, (you'll) fall asleep'. Shortly after, he adds: 'Do it faster. (You're taking so long) it's the next morning already'. He takes the chopper from Max and shows him how to dice the tomatoes. He watches Max do it for a while and then leaves. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

In Extract 5.20, Eric was walking by when he stopped at Max's work station and watched him work. He warned him about the executive chef's disapproval of wastage and provided advice on getting around this:

Extract 5.20

Max goes to the cutting station and starts to slice the tomatoes. Eric walks by, stops and watches him. He sees Max slicing off and discarding the tops and bottoms of the tomatoes and tells Max to keep these and place them in a container, to be discarded only after he has completed all the slicing and when no one was watching. He tells Max that it was better to put them aside rather than discard them straightaway because if Chef Gordon sees him discarding them rather than re-using them, he would question why he was wasting them. Max acknowledges the advice by getting a container for this purpose. (FN, Joai Asian, 121020)

The proximity of work stations and the physical layout of the kitchens meant that workers could easily observe trainees' activity as the latter worked. This became apparent when workers stepped in to provide instruction on trainees' actions. Though trainees were in the 'back region' of the restaurant with other kitchen workers, they were 'frontstage' where their performance to the audience of workers was concerned. Their actions were highly visible and open to judgement by the workers. Like Atkinson's medical interns, trainee cooks at work were always 'on stage' and 'required to perform' (1999:77).

Trainees' frontstage performances were discredited when their actions required correction. Remedial instruction was provided by workers working in the vicinity or passing by their

work stations. Instruction was often therefore variously sourced rather than merely from the worker who assigned them the tasks. In addition, as Tanggaard pointed out in her study of apprentices in a Danish company, workplace instruction was ‘flowingly organised to take place when the need for instruction arises’, rather than at scheduled times or as part of a specific teaching situation as the case of instruction at vocational school might be (2005:119). Tanggaard’s point was based on data showing that apprentices requested instruction in the course of their work. The examples in this section support the writer’s point and show that the ‘flowing’ and contingent nature of workplace instruction was also constructed by workers themselves who provided remedial instruction when they observed trainees’ incorrect actions.

5.1.3 Encountering challenges

Among the challenges faced by trainees, working with speed and efficiency stood out as particularly problematic. Speed and efficiency were important features of kitchen work and repeatedly emphasised by workers. In Extract 5.21, Max was assigned by Toh to cut the cauliflower. Weng who was standing nearby judged that Max was doing the task too slowly. The latter demonstrated a more efficient way of doing the task:

Extract 5.21

Toh tells Max to cut the cauliflower and Max proceeds to do so. Weng watches Max as he cuts the cauliflower and tells him that he was cutting it too slowly. He takes over and shows Max how to do it more efficiently. Max cuts the cauliflower as Weng had showed him. Weng leaves him to it. (FN, Kaven’s, 121004)

In Extract 5.22, Max was directed by Shankar to prepare an oyster order. Max’s actions lacked the speed that Shankar expected and this prompted Shankar’s injunction to work faster:

Extract 5.22

Shankar tells Max to prepare an oyster order. He points to the photo on the wall and asks Max to prepare the oysters and plate them according to what was shown

in the photo. He watches as Max adds ingredients to the plate. He is not satisfied with Max's speed and asks him to work faster: 'Faster, faster. Better faster, faster'. (FN, Garde manger, 121108)

Working with speed and efficiency was a challenge for the trainees and their lack of these qualities was an often-heard comment when workers evaluated their work. Trainees at other placement kitchens fared equally poorly in working with speed and efficiency, and this was a source of frustration for them. While some trainees brushed it off, others decided to reconsider cooking as a career.

Extract 5.23 was excerpted from a chat I had with a trainee Sufi who worked in the kitchen of an outdoor café located in a busy shopping district. Sufi's chef had taken him to task for not being up to speed ('This is not your school. Don't do things so slowly. This is a café.'). Sufi however felt he would not be able to produce good work if he worked fast ('how am I supposed to do this perfectly if you ask me to do it fast?'):

Extract 5.23

I feel, I feel like, I don't know uh, because the sous chef once like shoot me in the face, you know, told me, 'This is not your school. Don't do things so slowly. This is a café.' Shoot me directly in the face ar! I was like, then how am I supposed to do this perfectly if you ask me to do it fast? (INT, Sufi, 121107)

Another trainee Zachary who worked in a hotel kitchen and whose role involved serving the breakfast buffet crowd described the breakfast rush and the expectation of workers that he worked fast ('Can you be faster?'). In response, Zachary tried to 'speed up':

Extract 5.24

Then when there's a lot of guests right? So what happens is, uh, if you didn't notice like for example one long stretch of customers standing in front of you and you're doing very slowly right? Your sifu right, or your master, your teacher right will start to nag at you, 'Can you please speed up faster? Can you be faster?' Then like, 'Can you be faster? Lots of customers is waiting. Don't make them wait!' Then I, 'okay, okay, okay' and I speed up and speed up and speed up'. (INT, Zachary, 121123)

But he was unable to meet the standards required by his chef ('Right now, my pace they still say very slow'):

Extract 5.25

And [the chef's] requirement is just that easy. He want me to fast-en up my hands, my legs, be fast, fast, fast. That's it. Ya. You know ar ... [Now I'm] a bit faster only ar. Not really that good ar. Their quality ar, their benchmark right, for me is faster up, speed up your pace. Right now, my pace they still say very slow. Very slow. (INT, Zachary, 121123)

After two months at placement, Zachary decided to consider an alternative career as he believed that he would not be able to work fast enough to meet the kitchen requirement for speed:

Extract 5.26

I'm that slow type actually. So for me, this fast pace...you call me to make wine, okay. You call me to be a wine brewer, I can be a wine brewer because I need to be slow, to be precise... I can skill things well, can read things well. I can read for life and I can skill for life but I can't cook because I can't be fast wat. They tell me I can be fast but I think for long-term, I can't be fast. So...I can't be that fast-paced person so I will move on to job that is slow-paced. (INT, Zachary, 121123)

Doing kitchen tasks was not simply a matter of task accomplishment. In addition to completing the task, kitchen workers expected trainees to work with speed and efficiency. This requirement was very much a challenge for trainees.

The challenge was compounded by the fact that some workers expected trainees to work out for themselves how speed and efficiency could be achieved. Extract 5.27 is excerpted from a conversation I had with Shane, who was a sous chef at Prome and the trainees' former college lecturer. Shane complained about Kyle's lack of efficiency in cutting the chillis:

Extract 5.27 'I hot you know' (REC, Maurie's, 121114)

- 1 Shane The basic thing ar, is like, you know, cutting chilli, very basic
- 2 thing wat.
- 3 YN Mmm.
- 4 Shane Am I right? So take one, cut. Wah, I see already, I hot, you

5 know. School never teach you how to cut chilli ar, I say.
6 Down here take two and three cut together wat. Learn mah.

Describing the task of cutting chillis as 'basic' (line 1), Shane was frustrated by Kyle's action of cutting one chilli at a time ('So take one cut. Wah, I see already, I hot, you know', lines 4-5). He sarcastically questioned if Kyle was not taught to cut chillis at college ('School never teach you how to cut chilli ar', line 5). At work placement now, Shane expected Kyle to line a few chillis up and cut them at the same time ('Down here take two and three cut together wat', line 6). Unlike Weng whom we saw earlier showing Max how to work more efficiently (Extract 5.21), Shane expected Kyle to somehow have worked out for himself how to do so ('Learn mah', line 6).

Part of trainees' experience lay in the challenges they faced at placement. When it came to doing tasks, working with speed and efficiency was particularly troublesome and a number of trainees found this to be a challenge. Inexperienced as they were, trainees lacked the necessary speed and efficiency required in the kitchens. Nonetheless, they were expected to work fast and in some cases to work out for themselves how to become more efficient. While most trainees took the negative comments from their superiors in their stride, at least one trainee felt he was perhaps unsuitable for a career in cooking as he could not work fast enough.

5.1.4 Rejecting rules of the trade

Trainees did not simply follow the instructions they were given. In some cases, trainees persisted with the methods they were more comfortable with than those suggested by workers. For example, in paring apples, Vincent's incorrect action was pointed out by a worker who then demonstrated to him how it should be done. But Vincent felt more comfortable with his own method and continued with it after the worker left. He accounted for this by stating that it was a matter of personal preference:

Extract 5.28

After Shankar leaves, Vincent reverts to his previous way of paring the apple, stating that: 'Different people have different ways of working. You see, if I bring the peeler down this way, I'll cut my hand'. (FN, Maurie's, 121116)

Another type of rejected instruction seemed more serious in terms of training to be a cook. In Max's case, he did not seem very much concerned with aesthetics in food preparation. Every trade has its rules but these rules may not be immediately appreciated by newcomers. To be sure, appreciation of the aesthetic component of one's work must be taught and learned (Fine 1985). As Fine noted, the novice may not recognise the criteria by which others such as those in his occupation judged as aesthetically pleasing and alternatively might not even be aware that such aesthetic concerns applied (Fine 1985:5). At the garde manger, the task of arranging ingredients on a plate, though seemingly straightforward, was demonstrated to trainees. In Extract 5.29, Shankar directed Max to the task of arranging pieces of cheese and tomato on a platter and showed him how to arrange them. When Max completed the task, Shankar evaluated the resultant arrangement and pointed out a gap in the arrangement. He proceeded to amend the arrangement as Max watched:

Extract 5.29

Shankar tells Max to arrange pieces of cheese and tomatoes in a circle on a plate. He shows Max how to place the pieces and leaves him to it. Max completes the arrangement and Shankar comes over and takes a look. He points out to Max a gap in the arrangement. Max takes a look and explains that he couldn't see very well. Shankar arranges the pieces of cheese and tomatoes as Max watches. Shankar takes the plate to the chiller. (FN, Garde manger, 121101)

To be sure, a concern for aesthetics was not explicitly stated by Shankar. Arguably though, it was implied in his comment on the gap in the arrangement and Max appeared to comprehend the error as he attempted to account for it by citing his poor vision. Moreover, Shankar had repeatedly emphasised attention to the visual presentation of food. Earlier in

the day, he took Max to task for not producing well-cut pumpkin wedges. He advised Max to work slowly on the task but do it well, stating that 'Slow never mind but must do nicely.'

However, Max did not seem to concern himself with the aesthetics in food preparation. Although he had twice on the same day received advice from Shankar to be mindful of visual display, he continued to complete his tasks quickly and paid little attention to presenting food pleasingly.

Max did in fact make an attempt to do so. Shortly after the cheese and tomatoes task (Extract 5.29), Max was directed by Shankar to shell and arrange prawns on another platter:

Extract 5.30

After shelling the prawns, Max arranges them on a long plate. Shankar comes over and takes a look. He tells Max that the rows of prawns were not neatly arranged. He points at a row of prawns which looked like they were simply thrown together and tells Max to arrange them one by one and close to the other so the arrangement would look nice. The prawns are of varying shapes and simply placing them one after the other does not create neat rows. Shankar tells him to place the prawns with the same size in the same row so that they would form a neat long row. (FN, Garde manger, 121101)

As Max carried out the task, Shankar came over and watched. The latter evaluated Max's ongoing work and provided instruction on the arrangement, explicitly specifying the procedure for making the arrangement visually appealing (arrange the prawns one by one and close to the other) and neat (place prawns of the same size in the same row). Following Shankar's instruction, Max removed the prawns he had placed on the plate and attempted to do as Shankar instructed. But he gave up after a while:

Extract 5.31

Max removes all the prawns and tries to arrange them neatly. After a few prawns and as the row starts to 'snake' in a different direction, Max starts to simply place one prawn after another. He manages to quickly place all the prawns on the plate but the resulting arrangement is not visually appealing. (FN, Garde manger, 121101)

Having already noted that Max tended to work speedily with little attention to the aesthetic quality of his output, for example in cutting vegetables, I attempted to elicit Max's views on visual display:

Extract 5.32

I ask Max why the prawns needed to be arranged neatly. He said he didn't know and added: 'If people wanted to eat it, they would just eat it mah'. (FN, Garde manger, 121101)

Although Shankar repeatedly emphasised aesthetics, Max paid little attention to it. In response to my query on the need for arranging the prawns neatly (Extract 5.32), Max stated that he did not know the reason for it and revealed his attitude towards it when he suggested that diners prioritised what they wanted to eat over how it looked ('If people wanted to eat it, they would just eat it mah').

Max's rejection of instruction on aesthetics contrasts with his usual acceptance of instructions, for example Weng's instructions on cutting the cauliflower more efficiently which we saw in Extract 5.21. While Max accepted instruction on the technical instrumental aspect of work i.e. how to complete the tasks, he rejected instruction on the aesthetic aspect of professional cooking. In doing so, he ignored the visual-sensory aesthetic of food preparation, which was an important aspect of professional cooking: 'we eat with our eyes', the conventional saying goes and as Fine asserts, 'the visual component has first priority in the aesthetic canons of food preparation' (1985:12). In rejecting aesthetics and showing a lack of concern with it, Max failed to appreciate an important rule of his trade.

Max's rejection of aesthetics may be considered in light of his desire to work fast and the apparent challenge for trainees in achieving speed/efficiency in task accomplishment as well as aesthetic quality in their output. Sous chef Shane at Prome mentioned to me that when trainees worked fast, the quality of their work suffered. In Extract 5.33 excerpted

from a conversation with Shane, the latter mentioned telling the trainees that they needed to both be fast and 'accurate' ('I told them off before, you are fast but you must be accurate also', lines 5-6). He complained that when Kyle worked fast, he 'anyhow cut' (lines 8 and 10):

Extract 5.33 'Anyhow cut' (REC, Maurie's, 121114/4:45:41)

- | | | |
|----|-------|---|
| 1 | YN | But they never learn [to do service work] in school, you know |
| 2 | | that right? |
| 3 | Shane | No, you know, like those onions, chilli, is it simple things? Which |
| 4 | | I have taught them a lot of times over there one, understand? |
| 5 | | Which your things ar, yes, I told them off before, you are fast |
| 6 | | but you must be accurate also, you know? |
| 7 | YN | Mmm. Mmm. |
| 8 | Shane | Fast doesn't mean, that day, [Kyle] also fast, [Kyle] anyhow cut. |
| 9 | YN | Anyhow lor. |
| 10 | Shane | Ar. Anyhow cut, you know. |

Similarly for Max, working fast was important to him and he consistently attempted to complete his tasks quickly. In trying to meet the requirement for speed, Max like the other trainees prioritised it over the aesthetic quality of the output.

5.1.5 Deriving enjoyment

Workers in kitchens had fixed roles, each preparing different parts of an order akin to a production line and they stayed within those roles in every shift. In doing Nellie's work (Section 5.1.1), trainees did the work of specific workers at specific stations. For example, doing the work of Weng and Eric meant cooking at the grill and fry stations; and doing the work of Henry (a commis cook) meant doing basic work such as plating orders, dishing soups and deep-frying fish fillets and chips.

This kind of specificity was characteristic of kitchen work. As Michelin-starred chef Shaun Hill observed in his early experience of working in a kitchen:

You get to understand how some people could make a whole career in a kitchen but couldn't cook you a three-course meal because they've always washed the

spinach or grilled things but they have never ever made a sponge. It's odd in that you never get the whole experience ([Interview] Wright 2006:105)

But the specificity of work in doing Nellie's work potentially narrowed the range of knowledge that could be gained from work. At the patisserie for example, trainees learned to work from one worker in one of the two departments; they worked alongside Kwan who worked in the bakery and thus hardly had the opportunity to experience working in the pastry department. It was not surprising that Max was happy to stay on in the kitchen after his shift on the few occasions that pastry chef Mun offered to teach him to make pastries and dessert.

However while work specificity might limit exposure to a range of kitchen work, it was also under this condition that trainees learned to do their work well. Sophie's experience at HS provides a striking example. Specificity entailed repeated doing of the same activities and this produced confidence and enjoyment in one's work capability.

The following extracts (Extracts 5.36-5.40) track Sophie's development in the role of aboyeur at her placement kitchen. The aboyeur in a kitchen controlled the flow of work and quality of completed orders before they were served. The role involved announcing orders received from servers, checking the quality of the dishes produced and placing condiments and garnish on the dishes before pushing them out to the servers to be served.

As college lecturer Gina explained to me:

Extract 5.35

[The aboyeur] is the one who is responsible for picking up the food from the kitchen because the food must pass this person's so-called expectations la. He or she will check the presentation. He or she will check the taste before it's being passed over to the F&B. F&B side also got one caller. So both these caller we call them aboyeur. ... So example, the two soup [starters] will go out, like the tomyum soup and the chicken and corn soup, so both of them, they will go out together. So after they go out, the [kitchen] aboyeur will wait for the aboyeur from F&B. This F&B will say, okay, fire main course, table what what what. So this aboyeur will turn to the kitchen, 'fire' what main course la, two fish curry, one katsu-don, one vegetarian tempura. Fire the food, you know. (INT, Gina, 120910)

As the role required coordinating the outputs of different workers and organising the orders to be served on each order ticket which easily multiplied during a kitchen rush, it was typically assumed by the most senior chef in the kitchen or at least an experienced worker.

In Sophie's placement kitchen, the head chef was the aboyeur and he juggled this role with cooking orders. On Sophie's fourth day in the kitchen, the head chef assigned her the role of aboyeur as he himself concentrated on cooking. This arrangement left Sophie doing Nellie's work without Nellie's guidance. Unsurprisingly, Sophie found this work extremely challenging initially. She not only had no experience with the role but as she was new to the kitchen, she was unfamiliar with the range of orders and their names (which was further complicated by the fact that the dishes were all named in Japanese), how to judge the quality of each order and which garnish should be placed with it, as well as the timing and coordination needed for ensuring a smooth flow of orders between kitchen and dining room:

Extract 5.36

Sophie says she's the aboyeur during service hours. This is surprising to me since it's only her fourth day here and the role of the aboyeur is actually rather demanding. Sophie says she takes the order from the Micros machine and announces it to the chefs who will cook the food. She says this role is quite challenging because she is not familiar with the orders – can't pronounce the orders and didn't know what they were. (FN, HS, 121129)

Extract 5.37

Sophie checks the pending orders frequently. She says she gets confused easily and cannot remember which table she was readying each dish for. (FN, HS, 121129)

A week later, Sophie continued to fumble in the role and workers appeared every now and then at her side to check on the orders and provide instructions. The head chef came around a few times and stood by her side as she worked. The following week, Sophie

appeared able to cope. She described the role as requiring her to multi-task which had been hard for her initially but she became adept at it gradually:

Extract 5.38

Sophie tells me she has learned to multi-task – this is an improvement from last week! She said she found it hard at first. She said she tried to concentrate on doing one thing at a time and then she panicked when she saw the other orders piling up but gradually she got the hang of it and is better able to multi-task now. (FN, HS, 121212)

A month after that, Sophie was completely comfortable in her role. She looked relaxed and confident, and kitchen workers worked smoothly under her direction:

Extract 5.39

Sophie is still playing the role of aboyeur. She announces the orders and tells the individual chefs what to prepare. Typically, the service staff come in and tell her which table is ready for the next course. Sophie checks the order ticket and announces to the cooks what to prepare. Sophie seems to be doing well in this role. She is looking relaxed. She is laughing and joking a lot more and doesn't look at all tense even when the orders start coming in quickly. She is also managing her team well and they are following her orders. (FN, HS, 130117)

From being tense and feeling helpless at the start when she did not know what the various Japanese menu items were and had been struggling to coordinate orders, Sophie gradually became relaxed and competent as an aboyeur. Remarkably, she even grew to like the role and appeared to have won the respect of full-timers in her kitchen:

Extract 5.40

I chat with Sophie about how she feels about her work now. She says that she is happy that she is handling her job well. She says she likes playing the role of aboyeur. I see her controlling the kitchen and people doing her bidding and tell her I've noticed her doing that and doing it well. She blushes and says she tries to do her best. I ask her to describe what she did as aboyeur and she says she doesn't have the words right now but she tries to explain anyway. She says she shouts out the orders and then waits a while before calling out to the various chefs to cook the next course. She says she tries to estimate when the table has finished the first course before telling the chefs to 'fire' the next course. As the chefs prepare their items, she keeps an eye on the stage of their preparation and prepares the trays for them. She also mentions that she checks on the orders before they go out and has pointed out to the chefs when they've given her the wrong thing and they apologise to her. I ask if she feels like a full-timer now and she says 'yes'. (FN, HS, 130117)

Although the specificity of kitchen work constrained Sophie's options in learning other work, it was specificity that enabled her to achieve the necessary competence of an aboyeur. Specificity meant that Sophie performed a certain role and the activities associated with it over and over again. As Billett (2000:3) has pointed out, frequently-encountered activities reinforced learning and provided confidence when engaging with tasks. Through repeated doing of the same work, Sophie learned to manage her role, became competent in it, gained confidence and enjoyment in her work and even won the respect of full-time workers.

5.1.6 Getting to Nellie

In addition to being an authentic practice in kitchen work and therefore valuable in itself, work specificity potentially produced confidence and enjoyment in one's work capabilities, as Sophie's experience has showed. Nonetheless, some trainees made attempts at overcoming work specificity, for example when they wished to work at a different station to that which they had been assigned.

The TVC trainees without exception chose their course of study out of a professed interest in cooking and were keen to deepen their knowledge about it. At work placement, they expected to cook and desired to work at cooking stations.

The stations that they especially coveted were the Asian cooking stations. TVC kitchens served predominantly Western cuisine but in two kitchens (Prome and Joai Asian), there were Asian sections preparing a range of Asian food. At the Asian section in Prome, trainees rarely got to cook. This was partly because Polly, the Asian cook there, was rather unfriendly and unapproachable, and trainees tended to stay away from her. Vincent's strategic approach towards cooking at Polly's station is telling:

Extract 5.41

Vincent tells me he likes to hear the sound of the wok being lifted and placed back over the fire. I asked him if he did any work with the wok and he said he only did so at Prome with Polly. I expressed surprise and said she was unusually nice to him (since she always seemed unfriendly) and the other trainees never got to cook with her. Vincent said you had to know when to ask her, for example, in the afternoon when no one else was around and she was feeling 'peaceful', and not when she was busy and feeling stressed out. (FN, Maurie's, 130108)

At Joai Asian, some trainees were told they would work in the Western section in the first week of their two-week stint and following that, the Asian section. As it turned out, the trainees spent most of their stint in the Western section where they plated orders, dished soups and deep-fried fish fillets during service. They hardly had the opportunity to cook, whether in the Western or Asian sections, nor to work at all in the Asian section. But Justin and Max made attempts at getting to Nellie in the Asian section.

In Justin's case, he looked for opportunities to cook in the Asian section when his sous chef, Peter, was not around. Dropping by the Joai Asian kitchen one morning, I found Justin cutting vegetables (a task that trainees at the Joai Asian were usually assigned to do) and chatted briefly with him. Justin told me his plans for the evening:

Extract 5.42

I ask Justin if he enjoyed cutting vegetables and he said he didn't and that he'd rather go and 'play the wok' [cooking in the Asian section]. He said he'll probably get a chance to do that this evening since the sous chef Peter won't be around. (FN, Garde manger, 121102)

In Max's case, he made repeated attempts to work in the Asian section at Joai Asian. Joai Asian was managed by sous chef Peter and the Asian section hired three cooks namely Liam, Dominic and Liong. On his first day at Joai Asian, Max reported at the kitchen and approached the Asian section where Dominic was doing his mise-en-place:

Extract 5.43

Max reports at Joai Asian. He approaches Dominic and asks him where to get the chef's hat but it turns out the kitchen has run out of it. (FN, Joai Asian, 121015)

As Dominic continued with preparing his station, Max hung around the Asian section.

Dominic then assigned him a task:

Extract 5.44

Dominic takes Max to the walk-in chiller and shows him vegetables to retrieve – young corn, broccoli and cauliflower. (FN, Joai Asian, 121015)

Whilst engaged with Dominic, Max was called away by sous chef Peter to work on another task:

Extract 5.45

Sous chef Peter calls him over and tells him to slice the mushrooms. He slices one mushroom into four parts as a sample and asks Max to slice the rest. Max slices the mushrooms and when he fills up a tub, Peter tells him it's enough. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

With the task completed, Max returned and stood beside Dominic, watching as the latter cooked. But five minutes later, Henry called him away and told him to follow him downstairs to collect the day's deliveries. Returning to the kitchen, Henry instructed Max on packing away the collected items (Extract 5.46) and the necessary actions on other items (Extract 5.47):

Extract 5.46

Henry shows Max where to place the various items. He tells Max to push the trolley to the centre of the kitchen and tells him to take a few items and to place them in one chiller. As Max places the tomatoes in the container in the chiller, Henry tells him to place the fresher tomatoes to the back of the container, leaving the ones already in there nearer the front so that they will be picked up by the cooks first. (FN, Joai Asian, 121015)

Extract 5.47

Henry tells Max to open and defrost the frozen prawns. Max opens up the package and fills the tray of frozen prawns with water to defrost the prawns. (FN, Joai Asian, 121015)

Following this, Henry instructed Max on plating orders, dishing soups and deep-frying fish fillets in the Western section and Max carried out these tasks for the rest of the shift.

The next day, Max reported at Joai Asian and approached Liam who was setting up his station at the Asian section. Liam then assigned him a few tasks:

Extract 5.48

Max reports at Joai Asian and goes to the Asian section. Liam is here setting up his station. He sees Max and tells him to wash some dish cloths, turn on the stoves and fill the water in the bain-marie. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

Whilst carrying out the tasks as Liam directed, Max was assigned by Peter to do another task:

Extract 5.49

Peter comes along and tells Max to collect the oxtail stew and onion soup from the chiller downstairs. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

Max left for the hot production kitchen to collect the required items. When he returned, Peter directed him to collect the day's deliveries from the receiving department. After the various items were collected, Peter showed Max where to place them and what to do with some of the items. Then he assigned Max to do vegetable-cutting for the rest of the shift.

Max was keen on working in the Asian section at Joai Asian as his actions on his first two days in the kitchen showed. Rather than approach Peter the sous chef who headed the kitchen and thus the go-to person when trainees began their stint in each kitchen, Max approached the Nellies whose work he wanted to do, namely Dominic and Liam, and hung around their work stations. Moreover on the first day, after completing the task assigned by Peter, Max returned to standing with Dominic at the latter's station.

But on both days, Max was called away by Peter on other tasks. Max interpreted this state of affairs as Peter's expectation that he worked in the Western section instead of the Asian one. Towards the end of the second day, I asked Max why he stood at the Western instead of the Asian section:

Extract 5.50

Max said he preferred to learn at the Asian section but he felt that Peter wanted him in the Western section. When I asked if Peter had told him so, he said that he had not but it could be inferred and so he stands at the Western section. (FN, Kaven's, 121016)

Several days later, Max remained unhappy about the situation and commented on what he interpreted as Peter's expectation of him to work in the Western section:

Extract 5.51

Max continues to plate and garnish orders. He has not had a chance to do any Asian cooking and he is not happy. He says that Peter pulls a long face when he goes and stands with [Liam] and [Dominic], and that Peter would always call him over when he stands with them. He said Peter is happier today because he was by his side to help him. (FN, Joai Asian, 121020)

Two days later though, there appeared to be an opportunity for Max to work at the Asian section and he expressed his hope to cook there during lunch service. Dominic had called in sick while Liam was on half-day shift and would be coming in only during dinner shift. Liong was thus the only cook handling all the Asian food orders. When lunch service started, Max went and stood beside Liong as the latter cooked:

Extract 5.52

Orders start coming in. Liong is the only cook in the Asian section today. Dominic had called in sick and Lim was scheduled for the dinner shift. Max tells me he hopes he gets to cook the Asian dishes today. He goes and stands beside Liong at the Asian section and watches as the latter cooks a prawn noodle soup. (FN, Joai Asian, 121022)

As we saw when Max approached Dominic and Liam and hung around their stations in the first two days at Joai Asian, Max was here again positioning himself with a particular Nellie and attempting to work, if not independently at an Asian cooking station, at least alongside a worker working in the Asian section. But shortly after, Max was called away by Peter:

Extract 5.53

Peter calls Max away from the Asian section where he was helping Liong put together ingredients for the dishes. Peter tells Max to help with the Western section. I help Liong prepare the ingredients he needs. (FN, Joai Asian, 121022)

By 12.30pm, the kitchen was in a massive rush as orders started pouring in. Despite his best efforts, Liong's orders started piling up. Max who had been working in the Western section since Peter's instruction to him to do so (Extract 5.53) came over to the Asian section and started cooking the orders:

Extract 5.54

The kitchen is getting really busy and Weng from Kaven's has come over to help. Max prepares the ingredients for Weng's dishes. Peter calls out an endless stream of orders, checks with the cooks on ongoing orders and quickly tastes and garnishes the dishes before getting them out to be served. Weng is helping with the frying in the Western section and Henry is doing the deep-frying and soups. At the Asian section, Liong has been frying dish after dish. Soon, the dishes in the queue for Liong to fry start piling up and Max comes over and takes a dish and prepares to fry it. Liong gives Max instructions on the ingredients and condiments to add as the latter fries the order. Max does a fried kuay teow, a prawn noodle soup and a Nonya laksa. (FN, Joai Asian, 121022)

Max was clearly interested in working at the Asian section and he attempted to do so several times with the workers in that section. But he was also aware of Peter's expectation of where he should work and each time when he was called away by the latter, he worked in the Western section, thus performing 'the good trainee'. Yet he persisted in making these attempts and cooked in the Asian section during a massive kitchen rush when the section was shorthanded. A few days later, Max was allowed to work in the Asian section and he did so until the end of his stint at Joai Asian. This latter period saw him doing Nellie's work with Liam at the latter's Asian cooking station.

Trainees had expectations of what they could potentially learn at placement and they had preferences for certain types of work. Max's experience in the Joai Asian kitchen showed his attempts at getting to do the work of particular Nellies. Dissatisfied with the position assigned to him i.e. working in the Western section, Max sought opportunities to work in the Asian section which he preferred. As we saw earlier in his rejection of aesthetics, Max did not simply follow instructions set out by workers and in fact made decisions on his

learning including instructions to accept and those to reject as well as the ways in which to participate in the kitchen.

It is also worth noting that getting to Nellie to do Nellie's work was tricky business and Max showed sensitivity in managing his desired form of participation with the expectations of his chefs. Making manoeuvres into the Asian section was risky since they involved defying what his chef Peter expected and potentially displeasing the very individual he sought to impress. Following Max's failed attempts in the first two days, he in fact made no further attempt until the occasion when the Asian section was shorthanded which was a week after. Moreover, when lunch service was concluded on the day, Max returned to working in the Western section and resumed the part of 'a good trainee'.

5.1.7 Making mistakes

Generally, mistakes in doing were pointed out by workers and typically they passed without much fuss. Consider for example the responses of workers to mistakes:

Extract 5.55

Max prepares a laksa order. Peter tells him he has added too much soup in it and scoops some out. (FN, Joai Asian, 121026)

Extract 5.56

The ciabatta sandwich is returned to the kitchen. The server tells us that it contains mayonnaise although the guest had specifically requested to leave out the mayonnaise when she made the order. Don and Max check the order ticket and see that it was stated there but Max hadn't checked this when he prepared the sandwich. Don doesn't say anything. He takes the plate, removes the sandwich and puts a ciabatta to toast. (FN, Esbar, 121210)

Max's mistakes did not result in any negative backlash. In Extracts 5.55 and 5.56, Peter and Don respectively, proceeded to amend the mistakes themselves. In fact some mistakes were opportunities to be instructed on exactly what was needed: in Extract 5.55, Peter's correction informed Max about the amount of soup for the laksa order.

Even with orders which had to be cooked again and which resulted in substantial delay in service, mistakes were hardly dwelt on and were simply rectified by the production of a replacement. In Extract 5.57, Max's attempt at an order was rejected by Polly and Boh. Polly then cooked the dish again and instructed Max on the process. This mistake also provided an opportunity to learn how the dish should be prepared:

Extract 5.57

Max cooks the fish beehoon [rice vermicelli] soup. When it is ready, he scoops some soup, brings the ladle to his lips and tastes the soup. Satisfied with it, he scoops the noodle and soup out but Boh and Polly say the broth is too dark. Polly drains away the broth and cooks a new bowl of soup. She gives a running commentary on her actions. When the dish was ready, she scoops it out and serves it. (FN, Prome, 130122)

This was the case with the other trainees as well. In Extract 5.58, Stanley left the garlic unattended and it ended up being burnt. On seeing the mistake, Paul did not admonish him; instead, he offered advice on how to avoid a similar situation:

Extract 5.58

Stanley is making a pasta dish with mussels at Maurie's. He leaves the garlic to fry in a pan but it gets burnt while he was plating a dish and looking for the other ingredients for the pasta. Paul sees this and tells him to prepare and have all the ingredients near him before he starts making any dish so that he could monitor whatever he was cooking. Stanley verbally acknowledges the advice with an 'orh'. (FN, Joai Asian, 121004)

Mistakes made by trainees did not seem to be problems in themselves and even presented opportunities for trainees to learn. In fact at least one worker's approach to instruction seemed to be based on the idea that one learned through making mistakes and having mistakes corrected was more important than checking everything in advance. Extract 5.59 provides illustration:

Extract 5.59

There is an order for Penang kuay teow and Liam gets Max to prepare the ingredients for him to fry. Max opens the chiller drawer and removes the ingredients: prawns, bean sprout, fish cake. He looks up tentatively at Liam as he does this. Liam smiles and tells him: 'Don't look at me. I'll tell you when you reach for

the wrong ingredient. Can't be expecting me to always hold your hand.' Max misses one ingredient and Liam says: 'Missed out something. Chives.' Max adds it to the plate. (FN, Joai Asian, 121026)

Max's work involved putting ingredients together for Liam to fry but he was uncertain about the ingredients required and appeared to proceed through a mix of guesswork and layman knowledge. Guessing what the ingredients might be, Max started to remove them from the chiller drawer. As he did so, he looked towards Liam for guidance but the latter did not explicitly provide any. Instead, Liam smiled encouragingly, implied that he was not going to provide instructions and implicitly urged Max to go out on a limb and make mistakes ('Don't look at me. I'll tell you when you reach for the wrong ingredient'). Liam appeared to be doing so to encourage Max's sense of confidence and independence ('Can't be expecting me to always hold your hand'). Max missed an ingredient in the end and Liam simply told him what it was.

Trainees attempted to avoid (sometimes conceal) mistakes but workers seemed to treat mistakes as part and parcel of life in the kitchens and mistakes usually passed with little fuss. In the professional kitchen, mistakes were common and inevitable, and cooks learned to deal with them: 'Cooks acquire techniques for coping with inevitable mistakes. It is the ability to deal with errors, not the ability to avoid them, that characterises the skilled worker' (Fine 1996b:31). As Liam's approach to instruction showed, Max was expected in the first instance to *do* and if mistakes were made, these were then to be corrected. Also, when trainees were assigned to tasks, sometimes with minimal instruction, and failed in carrying out the tasks correctly, workers simply stepped in to provide remedial instruction (as we saw in Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2). Working and learning in the kitchens was first based on the action of doing; when they occurred, mistakes were a matter of course, expected, tolerated and quickly rectified, and they offered opportunities for learning.

5.1.8 Validation

In the course of working, trainees became increasingly accustomed to and adept at kitchen work, and their competence was validated by workers. In Extract 5.60, Stanley, Max and Vincent were explicitly validated by Weng and Jeremy. The discussion in the extract took place at Maurie's where Max was working that week. Because Kaven's was shorthanded, Weng approached Jeremy to discuss assigning a trainee there for the next two weeks. Weng suggested Max and Jeremy agreed, stating that he wanted someone who could cook and he believed that Max could. Weng reiterated this and added two other trainees, Stanley and Vincent, whom he trusted to cook:

Extract 5.60

Weng [chef de partie at Kaven's] comes over and starts discussing with Jeremy [the executive sous chef] who's here at Maurie's about Max's change in schedule i.e. instead of going to Prome next week, Max will be going to Kaven's. Jeremy tells Max he would be working at Kaven's instead of Prome for the next two weeks. Dismayed, I ask Jeremy if another trainee could be assigned to Kaven's instead. Jeremy says he wanted someone who could cook and Max could. I ask Weng the same question and suggested other trainees. Weng said Stanley was another possible candidate and that he only trusted Stanley, Max and Vincent to cook. (FN, Maurie's, 130109)

The validation from Weng and Jeremy showed that the trainees were performing competently in their work and this had been noted by their superiors.

The validation in Extract 5.60 was explicit and arose in conversation between Jeremy, Weng and me. In relation to the trainees, such explicit validation was rare. More commonly, validation in the kitchens was implicit and performed in the consecutive actions of workers following trainees' actions. In Extract 5.61, Weng took the order cooked by Max to be served:

Extract 5.61

Max picks up an order for Vegetable Neapolita and Weng tells him to cook it as he watches. He had taught Max to make this dish previously. When it is completed, Weng seems pleased with the result. He takes the plate and places it on the service counter. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

In Extract 5.62, Eric did the same:

Extract 5.62

Max starts to pan-fry beef tenderloin, veal cutlet and lamb rack, and sears a cod. He places them in the oven. When they are ready to be served, he takes the veal and the cod out from the oven and passes them to Eric. Eric plates them and sends them out. (FN, Maurie's, 130108).

In performing these consecutive actions, Weng and Eric affirmed the output produced by Max: standards and requirements had been met and the order was fit for serving. Max's actions were allowed to stand and be replicated. Weng and Eric's actions implicitly validated Max's actions and competence with the orders.

Validation may also be inferred when workers' actions showed trust in Max to work independently. In Extract 5.63, Weng left Max to manage the lunch orders on his own:

Extract 5.63

Max is slicing the garlic. Weng is away on a smoke break. Max is the only one in the kitchen now. An order for lobster thermidor comes in and Max prepares it. (FN, Kaven's, 121010)

In Extract 5.64, Eric assumed the role of aboyeur at the service counter and trusted Max to cook the orders at his station without his supervision. Moreover, when the orders were ready, Eric's consecutive actions provided further validation; he made a quick visual assessment, put the final touches on the order and pushed them out to be served:

Extract 5.64

An order for three rib-eye steaks and four grilled cod. Max seasons them and prepares them on his own. Eric calls out the orders to him. Max clarifies the total number of each item and then prepares the dishes. Eric doesn't even watch Max; he is at the service table preparing the plates for the orders. Max appears to be handling the orders well and confidently. Eric doesn't comment on the orders he has prepared. He takes a look at them, places them on the plates, adds the condiments and sauces, and pushes them to the servers. (FN, Maurie's, 130105)

Max himself constructed validation through workers' actions. In Extract 5.65, Max interpreted Peter's lack of comment (and the subsequent serving of the dish) as validation:

Extract 5.65

When I asked Max later how he felt about the dishes he cooked, he said they were okay. He said he tasted them before serving, and that Peter also tasted them. I asked if Peter made any comment. He said that since Peter tasted the dishes and didn't say anything, the dishes must be fine. (FN, Joai Asian, 121022)

Reflecting the embodied nature of work in the professional kitchen where physical activities and actions constituted work in this setting, professional competence was accordingly displayed through physical actions. In the above examples, Max's physical actions were implicitly validated by workers. Validation took the form of workers' consecutive actions on his output i.e. in plating and putting his orders out to be served, trusting him to work independently of their instruction and even in their absence as well as their lack of comment on his actions.

The preceding discussion explored aspects of trainee experience as they engaged in *doing*. I described two doing-type situations and the nature of instruction in each, trainees' activity in the kitchens as frontstage performance, examples of sources of challenge and enjoyment, trainees' choices in accepting and rejecting instructions and moving into preferred learning positions, the implications of making mistakes and the nature of validation in the kitchens. In the following section, we turn to another salient action in this context, watching.

5.2 Watching

5.2.1 Watching to learn

In addition to doing, trainees watched in the kitchens. They watched as workers physically demonstrated requirements, techniques and procedures prior to doing the task. Extracts 5.66, 5.67 and 5.68 provide examples of Max watching and learning about the work of commis cook Henry:

Extract 5.66

Max follows Henry to the service table and watches as Henry shows him what his work involved. Henry prepares the ingredients for Shi Kai who will cook them. He

then gets a small plate, places the garnish on it and leaves it aside for the completed order. He scoops three pieces of oxtail and some sauce into a bowl. Henry tells Max the garnish for the oxtail stew, ikan kurau and lemon sole. Max takes out his notebook and notes the garnish down. (FN, Joai Asian, 121015)

In Extract 5.66, Henry showed Max how to carry out his work. Max subsequently prepared the relevant orders during service (Extracts 5.67 and 5.68) and was validated by sous chef Peter in the form of nodding (Extract 5.67) and in placing the fish on the plate that Max had prepared (Extract 5.68):

Extract 5.67

Max prepares an oxtail stew order. He was shown the preparation by Henry earlier and he prepares the order on his own now. Max takes the oxtail stew he prepared to the service counter. Peter looks at it and nods. (FN, Joai Asian, 121015)

Extract 5.68

Max gets a plate, places the required garnish on it for the ikan kurau order and passes it to Peter. Peter takes a quick glance and places the ikan kurau on it to be served. (FN, Joai Asian, 121015)

There were specific ways of carrying out work in different kitchens and watching was necessary to learn the practices in each kitchen. In the above extracts, Max watched, listened and replicated Henry's actions. His actions were validated by Peter who checked the orders before sending them out to the servers.

Trainees also watched as workers amended their output and indirectly received instruction on how to perform tasks properly. In Extract 5.69, Liong commented that the spinach minced by Max was not minced finely enough. He proceeded to mince the spinach more finely as Max watched:

Extract 5.69

Peter tells Max to mince the spinach. When Max has finished, Liong takes a look at the minced spinach and tells Max he hasn't minced it finely enough. Liong takes the chopper and starts mincing the spinach. He lifts sections of the spinach, folds them over and minces. He repeats this action until the spinach is very finely minced. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

In Extract 5.70, Max watched as Peter diced the carrots into smaller pieces:

Extract 5.70

Peter brings over a tray of diced carrots. He tells Max the diced carrots were too big and he takes the knife from Max and slices them into smaller pieces. Max watches as Peter did so and offered to work on the rest. (FN, Joai Asian, 121020)

Learning through watching was in fact expected of the trainees. In Extract 5.71, Max was directed by Liam to watch the activity of another cook Dominic:

Extract 5.71

Dominic gathers the ingredients for a seafood kuay teow order. Liam tells Max to watch and note the ingredients Dominic was gathering. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

In Extract 5.72, sous chef Steven directed Max to watch commis cooks John and Seb prepare à la carte orders:

Extract 5.72

Steven tells Max to watch as two cooks prepare orders from the à la carte menu. Max observes as John prepares the desserts and Seb the salads. They gripe about the customer who has just returned the salad complaining that the portion was too small. They ignore Max who continues to stand by and watch. (FN, Garde manger, 121031)

Watching was treated as a mode of learning in the kitchens. Trainees watched as workers carried out physical actions that they must replicate in order to perform kitchen tasks competently. Instruction was often in the form of physical demonstrations to show how the relevant physical actions should be organised for task accomplishment. It was typically provided in concrete terms and involved minimal use of the abstract form of language. Trainees received instruction through watching rather than listening to a verbal discourse on the activities.

5.2.2 Watching and legitimate presence

In addition to a mode of learning, watching provided trainees with a valid activity to engage in in the kitchens and legitimated their presence. Not infrequently, trainees were sidelined from production activities and they stood near to workers, watching as the latter worked.

In the initial period of starting at a kitchen, trainees were unfamiliar with the work and unable to engage in *doing*. They took up a physical location in the kitchen and watched the workers. Extract 5.73 is taken from my fieldnotes recorded on the second day of Max's work placement. We arrived early but not knowing what to do, Max stood around and watched:

Extract 5.73

Max and I wait in the kitchen for Toh to arrive to start the day's work. Toh arrives 25 minutes later and immediately starts removing ingredients from the chillers, preheating the oven, removing pots and pans from the cabinets and placing them on the stoves and lighting up the stoves. We stand in a corner and watch. (FN, Kaven's, 121004)

On occasion, Max's work was taken over by workers, for example in situations where there was a surge in orders, leaving Max with no active role. But he remained in position and watched the workers. Extract 5.74 occurred at the end of two weeks during which Max had cooked during service. Under pressure to get the orders out promptly, Weng took over the cooking from Max and the latter stood by and watched:

Extract 5.74

A number of orders come in at once. Weng takes over the frying and grilling from Max. Max stands by and watches. (FN, Kaven's, 121013)

Vincent was excluded from directly participating in certain work activities at Maurie's and spent much of his time watching the workers. He appeared to have understood it as something expected of the trainees ('It's true la, right? We observe them la.') but was not certain that he was learning much from watching:

Extract 5.75

Vincent is unhappy about being in the role of observer. He thinks that it was expected of trainees to observe the chefs but he felt that observation was not sufficient for learning ('It's true la, right? We observe them la. But you see you never do, also you forget one wat') and did not believe that they could learn by watching alone ('How you expect me to see? See never do, how you know right?'). (FN, Maurie's, 121114)

In the butchery, trainees were not allowed to work on expensive meats and seafood and, after completing their daily routine of deboning chickens, they watched the butchers' activity. Extract 5.76, Justin lamented that the 'problem' with working in the butchery was that he only watched ('see') but did not do ('touch') the work:

Extract 5.76

Justin talks about his experience at the butchery and wondered why trainees were placed at the butchery when they were not given much to do there and spent most of their time watching the butchers. I suggested that he could learn things there that he might not have learned in school. He lamented that 'the problem is I can see but I cannot touch'. (FN, Garde manger, 121105)

The above extracts show trainees being explicitly excluded from direct and active participation. With no active role to play, they watched the activity of workers. Although they expected to do rather than watch and the observer role did not go down well with them, the activity of watching provided them with a valid role in the kitchens. They were expected to and allowed to watch the workers, and in fact only *they* could watch extensively; the activity of watching the workers made it acceptable for trainees to be in an almost-constant busy working environment without participating in the action as all other workers should. Watching in fact legitimated their presence in the kitchens.

Part of the role of being a trainee involved watching the activity of workers. Watching was treated as a mode of learning and mandated by workers: watching physical demonstrations, trainees were expected to replicate the actions when they subsequently carried out kitchen tasks. Watching also gave trainees a legitimate presence in the kitchens when they took no part in the productive activities of the work setting.

5.2.3 Watching actively

Max was an active observer and maximised learning opportunities as he watched. His activity in watching was not simply 'looking' but watching actively to gather information. Max made notes, asked questions and attempted to carry out activities that he observed. In Extracts 5.77 and 5.78, Max watched the workers gather ingredients for orders and made notes of the ingredients in a notebook that he carried on him:

Extract 5.77

There's an order for claypot vegetables. Max watches as Liam gathers the ingredients for the order. He writes the ingredients down in his notebook. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

Extract 5.78

Max watches Dominic fry the sweet and sour pork dish and notes the ingredients in his notebook. (FN, Joai Asian, 121018)

Intrigued by Max's habit of making notes, I asked him what he recorded in his notebook. Max's reply revealed he was attempting to learn from what he has seen in the kitchens. He told me that he made notes of ingredients and their quantities as well as the brands of products used:

Extract 5.79

I ask Max what he writes in his notebook besides recipes. He says he writes about portions (quantities of ingredients), the brands of products used in the kitchens and 'new' ingredients. I remark that he learnt a lot of ingredients here and he agreed, adding that for example, he had never seen celeriac before. (FN, Esbar, 121211)

In the process of watching, Max made information requests. In Extract 5.80, Max watched by Joshua's side as the latter marinated the chicken wings. He then asked Joshua about the ingredients in the marinade. Joshua provides this information and Max noted them in his notebook:

Extract 5.80

Joshua marinates the chicken wings as Max watches. Max asks him the content of the marinade. Joshua tells him the ingredients and their proportions. Max notes them down in his notebook. Joshua goes to the cabinet and removes a folder containing recipes and shows Max the recipe for chicken wings. Max copies the recipe from the folder. (FN, Esbar, 121210)

In Extract 5.81, Max watched as Liong fried an order and was prompted to seek further information. Uncertain about the condiment Liong was adding to the dish, he made a request for this information from Dominic:

Extract 5.81

Max watches as Liong fries a Fried Kuay Teow. He sees Liong spritzing a condiment from a yellow bottle and asks Dominic what the bottle contained. (FN, Joai Asian, 121018)

Finally, Max also attempted to carry out the activity workers did after having watched their actions. In Extract 5.82, Liong was deboning and cutting the chickens into parts to be set aside for chicken rice orders placed during service. Max watched Liong for a while and then asked if the latter could teach him the procedure:

Extract 5.82

After slicing the tomatoes as Liong instructed, Max goes over to him and watches as he debones a chicken. After watching for a while, Max asks Liong if he could teach him how to do it. Liong debones three chickens and lets Max do the last one. Max makes a cut into the side of the chicken and tries to pull the wing off. Liong sees that he is struggling and takes over. He takes hold of the chicken and demonstrates to Max how to do it. Liong shows Max how to cut off the thigh meat and leaves Max to do the other thigh. Max struggles with it for a while. Liong returns and shows Max how and where to make the cut. Then he cuts out the breast meat and leaves Max to cut the other side. Max manages to do this. When the parts were all cut, Max removes the bones from the thigh. (FN, Joai Asian, 121022)

As Liong was trying to get the chicken parts ready for service (it was noon and lunch service then), he worked on three chickens before leaving the last for Max's attempt. It is worth noting that although Max had requested instruction from Liong, the latter did not provide verbal instruction on the procedure; instead he left the fourth chicken to Max to work on. Max was expected to learn the procedure by physically doing it rather than through verbal

instructions or talk. Verbal instructions were also not provided as Max worked on the chicken; instead, Liong intervened when Max struggled with the activity. Lastly, Liong's intervention was not in the form of verbal instructions either; he physically demonstrated the required actions.

Incidentally, the above extract also suggests that for at least some kitchen activities, watching alone was not sufficient for learning to do kitchen work. In deboning chickens, watching the (expert) actions of Liong disguises the challenges of the task and it was only by physically doing the activity that Max's difficulties with the task surfaced.

Max also attempted to do Nellie's work after watching the actions of particular workers. In Extract 5.83, Max watched as Paul plated lunch orders and attempted to plate two orders himself. As he did so, Paul remained behind to provide instruction and supervise:

Extract 5.83

Max watches as Paul plates the orders. Max then plates two tenderloin orders as Paul supervises, telling him the right settings, garnish and sauces. (FN, Maurie's 121123)

In the process of watching, Max made notes, sought information and even attempted to carry out the actions he watched. Rather than simply a bystander taking in the general scene, Max was actively gathering and registering information about kitchen work.

5.2.4 Watching strategically

Max's action of watching also appeared to be strategic. Given that it was legitimate for trainees to observe workers and that there were no inherent work responsibilities in the observer role, Max was at some liberty to select positions in which to watch and he did so.

This involved in the first instance knowing where to position oneself. In Extract 5.84, Max's role was taken over by Samy and he stepped aside. He did not however leave the service

counter and for example join me in the corner of the kitchen. Remaining at Samy's side, Max watched the latter carry out the work required at the service counter:

Extract 5.84

As the orders start pouring in, Samy takes over the plating of dishes and Max steps aside. Samy gets the plates out and lays them on the service table, places the side vegetables on each plate, spoons the mashed potatoes on them and reminds Weng, who is doing all the cooking tonight, of waiting orders. Weng brings the cooked meats or fish over and places them on the plates. Then Samy pours the sauce over them and alerts servers to pick up the completed orders. Max watches by Samy's side. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

It may be suggested that Max remained at Samy's side because he was waiting to reclaim his work activity. That may be the case but nevertheless Max was indeed watching as Samy carried out the activity rather than taking up a bystander position elsewhere in the kitchen.

Max also selected and moved into particular positions to watch workers' activity. In Extract 5.85, a late order arrived near the end of dinner shift as workers were preparing to close the kitchen. Max was excluded from cooking the dishes and he took on the role of observer:

Extract 5.85

Just as the kitchen is preparing to close, an order for four lobster thermidors, one black cod and one Portobello mushroom comes in. Weng starts frying the cod, Leonard prepares the Portobello mushroom and Samy prepares the lobsters. Max, who is still trying to learn how to cut up the lobster, observes by Samy's side. Max then goes over to Leonard and observes by his side. He asks Leonard if the Portobello mushroom had to be grilled after pan-frying and Leonard says, yes, for a while. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

Max moved among the workers to observe their work. He first located himself at Samy's side and watched as the latter prepared the lobsters which he was still learning to do. He then moved over to watch Leonard's activity and inquired about the process for cooking the Portobello mushroom; Max had not had the chance to learn about cooking this order. Finally, Max did not watch Weng as the latter cooked the black cod because he had learned to cook this order and served it earlier in the day:

Extract 5.86

An order for black cod comes in and Max prepares it. Max had first observed Leonard preparing this dish on Monday (1155h). Then Toh showed him how to prepare it on Wednesday (1915h) and Weng on Thursday (1845h). Today he is preparing it on his own. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

Max often moved around and watched other workers when he completed his tasks. In Extract 5.87, Max completed his task of cutting the cherry tomatoes and after putting it away, he moved to Mei's station and watched as the latter cooked cauliflower soup:

Extract 5.87

Max is done with the cherry tomatoes and he cling-wraps the tray of cherry tomatoes. He goes over to Mei and watches as she prepares the cauliflower soup. Paul calls out to him to clean his work table which he worked on when cutting the tomatoes. Max returns to the table, wipes it and puts away his knife and chopping board. He returns to watching Mei prepare the cauliflower soup. (FN, Maurie's, 130111)

In this extract, although Max had completed his task of cutting the cherry tomatoes, he had not completed the work required of one working in the kitchen i.e. to clean up their work station. Strictly speaking, Max might be said to not have completed his task. Nonetheless, the extract provides an example of Max moving into position in which to observe workers. After cleaning the work table as instructed by Paul, Max returned to watching Mei work.

Another example is provided in Extract 5.88. Max completed the task of preparing the apple and celery salad and moved to Seb's station. He watched as the latter prepared a dip:

Extract 5.88

After Max has prepared the apple and celery salad, he goes over to Seb and watches as the latter prepares the mango salsa dip. Seb explains the recipe and ingredients to Max as he works. (FN, Garde manger, 121101)

It is worth noting that Seb commented on his activity and provided information to Max about the preparation of the mango salsa dip. In fact Max's physical positioning near to workers often prompted them to do so. In Extract 5.89, Max completed his task and moved

over to Eric's station. He watched as Eric whisked the Hollandaise sauce. Eric explained to Max about whisking and showed him the correct technique of doing so:

Extract 5.89

Done with turning the carrots, Max clears the trimmings into the trash. He goes to stand beside Eric and watches as he whisks the Hollandaise sauce. Eric tells him whisking wasn't merely about using force. He said that wasn't the correct technique. He shows Max the proper action for whisking the sauce. He shows him what Mei did and tells him that she wasn't doing it correctly. He tells Max to use his wrist to work the whisk. (FN, Maurie's, 130105)

Extract 5.90 provides a similar example. As Max watched by Ryan's side, the latter instructed him on cooking the clams in advance and on making judgements on when the clams were cooked:

Extract 5.90

Max watches as Ryan stir-fries some clams in a pan. Ryan tells him the clams should be cooked in advance so that there's no rush later when orders come in. He tells Max that when the clams open up, they are ready. (FN, Prome, 130115)

Max's action of watching was strategic in that he selected and moved into specific positions to watch workers work. In this way, Max observed a range of preparation and cooking methods. In addition to collecting information through watching, Max also received information when workers were prompted to comment on their activity.

Max's action in the following extract was rather striking in terms of watching strategically. Although executive chef Gordon was friendly, he was nonetheless the head of the kitchens and trainees tended not to approach him. On the occasion in Extract 5.91, he was accompanied by executive sous chef Jeremy whom trainees tended to stay away from as he was not perceived kindly by them nor indeed by other kitchen workers. Max's initial action of remaining behind to clean up his chef Eric's work area attests to this unwillingness to approach the two chefs.

However, when Chef Gordon started to pour wine into the pasta that had been specially created and prepared for a pre-booked dinner event, Max moved into position (joining the group) to observe its preparation:

Extract 5.91

Chefs Gordon and Jeremy drop by. Eric leaves the mixture and goes to talk to them. Max cleans up Eric's work area. Paul brings a big pot of angel-hair pasta to the two chefs. Max sees Chef Gordon pouring wine into the pasta and goes over to join the group. (FN, Maurie's, 121130)

When Max was not directly participating in work, he continued to make a connection with it through watching. As an observer, he was active and strategic in seeking out learning opportunities. He made notes, asked questions and attempted to reproduce his observations by carrying out the observed activities. He selected and moved into positions in which to observe and in this way, watched the activities of a range of workers working on a variety of orders. Watching, and Max's related activity in the process, enabled him to maximise learning opportunities in the kitchens.

5.3 Doing and watching in the everyday world

Compare the many rich sources of information available to the child who learns to weave by watching and doing: he sees particular bits of material varying in width and flexibility, feels their tension and resistance, compares his physical movements to those of the modeler, and integrates all these inputs from different sense modalities into his cognitive scheme of what weaving is all about. Learning to weave by hearing a discourse on it is quite a different situation.

Scribner and Cole's (1973:556) quote above illustrates the wealth of information one derives from watching and doing. Professional cooking and learning to work as a professional cook is surely in many ways unlike learning the craft of weaving but it is similar in that watching and doing were closely bound to learning. In the professional kitchen as it is in weaving, hearing a discourse on the activities involved is quite a different matter.

Doing and watching pervaded the day-to-day experience of trainees. The nature of work in the kitchens was constituted by physical activity: *doing* actions characterised the bulk of workers' activity. Accordingly trainees participated by *doing*. When trainees were not *doing*, they *watched* workers *do*. The actions of doing and watching provided learning opportunities.

Working in a setting in which the physical layout was open, trainees' activity was always 'frontstage'. As they engaged in tasks, they encountered challenges but also derived enjoyment. They made choices in accepting and rejecting instructions. They made mistakes but these were easily forgiven. Their professional competence was implicitly validated in the consecutive actions of workers.

When they were not engaged in physical activity, they watched other workers' physical actions. Watching was treated as a mode of learning and trainees were expected to learn by watching. It also established trainees' legitimate presence, giving them a valid role in the kitchens and the right to remain in it despite not contributing to production. For Max, watching also involved actively gathering information and moving strategically into positions to do so.

Trainees' physical and visual actions dominated their day-to-day experience. The production-focused and action-oriented context produced little talk between workers and trainees. When verbal interactions occurred, there were few exchanges. In the kitchens, instruction overwhelmingly involved kitchen requirements, techniques and procedures and these were typically shown to the trainees in the form of a physical demonstration. As we saw in this chapter, trainees were expected to learn by watching the workers' physical actions. In these demonstrations, talk was typically minimal and sometimes even precluded (e.g. Extract 5.82). The issue of talk is further explored in Chapter 7.

Doing and watching, each in itself, pervaded the day-to-day experience of trainees. However they were also often not separable in the same event. For example, *watching* led to physically replicating and *doing* the actions observed; (failed) *doing* prompted workers' physical demonstrations and entailed *watching* how tasks should be performed. In one specific action, doing and watching were mutually constitutive. It is to this action that we now turn in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 Origination

In the preceding chapter, I described the actions of doing and watching in the day-to-day world of trainees in the kitchens. A third action, uncovered from the context, was origination. In this chapter, I define and describe the concept. I discuss how it fitted the trainee into work processes and established their legitimate presence in the kitchens. The discussion is then cast wide into the broader context beyond the TVC kitchens to show the importance of this action to trainees working in the professional kitchen.

6.1 Defining origination

Origination is a term used by Whyte (1949) in his paper on the social structure of the restaurant. In the paper, Whyte explained how the source of origination affected relationships among employees. Whyte observed that work ran smoothly when higher-status individuals originated action for those of lower-status but frictions arose when lower-status individuals sought to originate for those of higher status. For example, supplymen would seek to originate action for cooks who were older, more senior in rank, more highly skilled and much higher paid; their relationship was one of the sore points of the organisation (1949:305).

Whyte did not elaborate on the term 'origination'. Fully acknowledging that 'origination' and other terms used in the paper were 'abstractions' without any substantive content as they stood (1949:309), he leaves to future research the task of determining the value of the abstractions. In this chapter, I build on the concept of 'origination', adding details and giving a more definite form to it. The adapted concept usefully describes an action recovered from the kitchen context.

Although the concept of 'origination' was not defined, it may be inferred from the ordinary meaning of 'originate' that it would be synonymous with 'to start' and refer to bringing

something into existence. In the example from Whyte (1949) cited above, what the supplymen were doing by originating action for the cooks was ‘bringing about work’ for the latter; this situation of lower-status individuals generating work for higher-status individuals was the source of their poor relations. In borrowing the term ‘origination’ from Whyte, I borrow the connotation of ‘bringing about work’.

However, I have modified some aspects of the concept from its original appearance in Whyte’s paper. In Whyte’s usage, the action that was to be carried out did not come from the individual who ‘originated’ it. When supplymen originated action for cooks, they expected the cooks to carry out a particular action. In my usage of ‘origination’, the actions of bringing about the work and carrying it out are considered as a single action done by the same individual (see columns 1 and 2 in Table 6.1 below).

Whyte also used the term ‘originate’ transitively for example, ‘supplymen seeking to originate action’ (1949:305). As I use the term to describe an action itself i.e. the action of bringing about work and carrying it out, I use the term intransitively without the object ‘action’ (see column 3 in Table 6.1 below).

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	<i>Initiator</i>	<i>Doer</i>	<i>Form</i>
Whyte	Self	Other	Action (originate) + object (activity)
Me	Self	Self	Action (originate + activity)

Table 6.1 Features of origination (adapted from Whyte 1949)

In addition to these modifications, my analysis of this action has added further details to its description, a summary of which is as follows. Origination is an action that involves bringing about work and carrying it out. It is a self-directed voluntary action that has not been solicited by co-workers and is targeted at contributing to the work situation. It involves watching and making judgements about what to do, when to do it and how, as well as

doing in the form of executing the action. The following section draws on the data to provide a conceptual elaboration of 'origination'.

6.2 Identifying origination

Origination can be identified in Max's actions very early in his placement. It is striking during this period because it involved generating work for oneself as one was only becoming acquainted with the work itself.

The first kitchen in which Max worked was Kaven's. On the first two days in the kitchen, Max mostly watched the goings-on as workers worked. The only time he did not do so was when fresh produce was delivered and Max was tasked to cut them. When these tasks were completed, Max resumed his role as an observer of the activity of workers. Towards the end of two days of watching, Max started to contribute to work activities without having been instructed by anyone to do so.

Extracts 6.1-6.3 provide examples of Max attempting to contribute to the activity of workers. In Extract 6.1, Toh was stir-frying ingredients for two pasta orders. Max watched as he did so and then retrieved the pasta from the working chiller so that it was readily available for Toh to cook with the ingredients:

Extract 6.1

Orders for a linguine and spaghetti dish come in and Toh throws the ingredients together in a pan. Max stands by and watches. Then he retrieves the pasta from the working chiller and sets it aside near the stove where Toh was cooking. When Toh is done stir-frying the ingredients, he puts it aside. Toh explains that these dishes were for main courses and he was waiting for the order to 'fire' (i.e. to start cooking the ingredients with the pasta). (FN, Kaven's, 121003)

In Extract 6.2, Max anticipated the next step in Weng's work activity and prepared the plates for the latter's dishes:

Extract 6.2

Max and I are back at Kaven's (from the split-shift break). Weng is here cooking. There are three orders waiting. Weng is the only cook here now and Max tries to help by taking out the plates from the warmer and placing them on the service table. Weng tells him it was too early to do so. Max puts the plates in the oven - the plates need to be hot when food is served on them. (FN, Kaven's, 121004)

In Extract 6.3, Max removed a pizza from the oven and proceeded to carry out the next step of slicing the pizza in preparation for it to be served:

Extract 6.3

Max looks in on the pizza in the oven and removes it. He places it on the pizza work table and starts to slice it but he makes a mistake slicing the pizza into uneven pieces. Samy salvages the situation by making eight slices out of the pizza instead of the usual six. (FN, Kaven's, 121003)

Max's actions in these extracts are notable in a number of ways. All of them involved Max acting out of his own volition to generate work for himself. The actions of retrieving the pasta for Toh, taking the plates for Weng, and removing and slicing the pizza which was Samy's work were undirected by the chefs; Max acted simply of his own accord. These actions were neither random nor irrelevant. They were purposeful, deliberate and contributed to a specific activity in the kitchen. They responded to ongoing activities by anticipating and producing next steps in the work process; Max judged where in the work flow he could insert himself and the way in which he could do so. These unsolicited, self-directed and purposeful actions are what I have termed as 'origination'.

It is also worth noting that Max's originations were acknowledged and responded to by the workers. For example in Extract 6.1, Toh's explanation for not completing the cooking of the order was arguably a response to Max's origination. Toh noted that Max had retrieved the pasta for him and provided an explanation for not taking it and working on it immediately. Likewise in Extract 6.2, although again no words were spoken by Max, his origination prompted Weng to verbally respond to it and provide the information that it

was carried out before it was time. Finally in Extract 6.3, Max's origination which involved a mistake was immediately noted by Samy who attempted to correct the error.

We can also note that the actions of doing and watching, described in the preceding chapter as actions that trainees engaged in as part of their 'work' in the kitchens, were often mutually involved in origination. Origination clearly involved *doing* a physical action but in addition it also entailed *watching*. To originate, it was necessary to 'tune in' to work situations in order to contribute meaningfully to them. Having watched the goings-on in the kitchen and developed a 'situational understanding' (Eraut 2004:264), Max was aware of or could anticipate tasks that needed to be done; and he produced the next steps in the work process. To illustrate, in Extract 6.1, Max judged from the order tickets that Toh was cooking the pasta orders and, watching Toh as he cooked, Max anticipated that Toh would soon go on to cook the pasta and he retrieved the pasta for him. Max had also watched and noted the particular working chiller (there were two columns of four drawers each of these chillers) from which to pick up the pasta.

Origination throughout the kitchens

Max's originations occurred throughout the kitchens. Extracts 6.4 and 6.5 provide examples from other kitchens. In these extracts, Max completed his tasks, looked for an activity that required doing and originated. In Extract 6.4, he originated the washing of plates and utensils which were needed by the workers as they cooked and in Extract 6.5, he originated by helping Aaron with the basil leaves:

Extract 6.4

Max has finished mashing the potatoes. He cling-wraps the trays of mashed potatoes. Max looks around the kitchen. He goes to the sink and washes the plates and utensils there. (FN, Maurie's, 121117)

Extract 6.5

Max prepares and serves a fish and chips order. He returns to the island work station and puts on a pair of gloves. He helps Aaron pluck the stalks off the basil leaves. (FN, Prome, 130122)

In Extract 6.6, Max reported to the kitchen following the split-shift break and watched as Mei worked on a beef stew. Anticipating that she would soon run out of bowls, he originated by readying trays of empty bowls and bringing them to her. He had also rightly judged the next action of cling-wrapping and putting the soups aside, and he originated on this as well:

Extract 6.6

Max reports at Maurie's and goes to the stoves. He stands beside Mei as she scoops beef stew into soup bowls in preparation for the event this evening. He brings her trays of empty bowls and when she has filled a tray of bowls, he cling-wraps the tray and puts it aside. (FN, Maurie's, 121130)

In originating, Max found work for himself when none was forthcoming from workers. It is likely that his originations stemmed from not wanting to feel 'useless' in the kitchens. In a conversation on our way to work one morning after Max had spent much of his time *watching* and not *doing*, I asked him how he felt about work placement and he replied glumly that he felt like a '废人' (useless person) because he had not been doing much in the kitchen. Conceivably, Max's originations were in part a result of fighting this feeling. Given Max's personality and as his record of taking leadership roles at college showed, I also suspected that it was because Max was not the sort to sit back and simply wait for something to happen. Max's passion for cooking and his hopes of carving out a career in the industry may also have led him to seek ways of contributing to work and potentially learning more at placement.

Having defined and described the concept, I turn now to exploring 'origination at work'. When they were smoothly carried out, evident in the implicit validation from workers and the absence of disruption to work processes, originations implied that the actions inserted

well into ongoing work and produced the trainee as a good fit in the work situation. When originations involved mistakes, the mistakes were rectified before the trainee and this facilitated their development of new understandings about work. Originations ranged on a cline from simple, basic and ad-hoc tasks to sophisticated acts that claimed work responsibilities to oneself and legitimated their presence in the work setting. As an unsolicited and autonomous action, origination carried a certain risk for trainees-as-newcomers as it eschewed the safety and conventionality of carrying out orders when directed and doing only what one were told to do. It involved a paradox for trainees and required careful management. These topics are discussed in the following sections.

6.3 Validation

As mentioned in Section 5.1.8, validation in the kitchens was often implicit and expressed in workers' consecutive actions following the trainees' actions or their lack of comment on those actions. The success of Max's originations may be seen in the implicit validation from workers. In Extract 6.7, Max originated by scooping cheese onto the lobsters and cooking them in the oven:

Extract 6.7

Just as the kitchen is preparing to close, an order for four lobster thermidors, one black cod and one portobello mushroom comes in. Weng starts frying the cod, Leonard prepares the portobello mushroom and Samy prepares the lobsters. Max watched as they worked. Then he opens the chiller drawer and checks on the ingredients. He goes to the chiller to get mushrooms and replenishes the mushroom insert in the drawer. Max steps out from the chiller and surveys the kitchen. Then he scoops cheese onto the lobsters and places them into the oven. When the lobsters are ready, Samy arranges the settings for the orders and alerts the servers to pick them up. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

With this origination, Max contributed to the work process of preparing the orders of lobster thermidor and showed his knowledge of a part of that process. His origination was implicitly validated by Samy when the latter subsequently plated and served the lobsters. It

is worth noting too that prior to originating the lobster orders, Max also originated on other activities (checking the ingredients and replenishing the mushrooms).

Another example of validation can be seen in Extract 6.8. In this extract, Max was watching as Pek cooked. Noticing the raw calf liver on the side of the stove and anticipating the next step, Max originated the plate setting for the order (scooping the mashed potatoes and placing the side vegetables for the order). Pek's consecutive action of placing the cooked order on it validated the origination:

Extract 6.8

Max goes to stand at the stove and watches as Pek cooks an order. He sees the raw calf liver on the side of the stove, the first plate of ingredients in a line all waiting to be cooked. He scoops mashed potatoes on a plate and arranges the side vegetables on it. He places the plate on the service counter. Pek fries the liver, picks up the plate and places the liver on it. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

Max's originations displayed his keenness to participate as a productive worker and contribute to ongoing work activities. More importantly, most of his originations were validated. In the above extracts, workers' consecutive actions on Max's originations provided implicit validation. In successfully originating, Max displayed his understanding of work processes i.e. the tasks that needed to be done and appropriate ways of doing them and inserted himself smoothly into ongoing work activities. Instead of standing around and observing as a bystander, Max originated and fitted himself among the workers in the kitchens.

6.4 Making mistakes

Some of Max's originations involved mistakes but as discussed in Section 5.1.7, mistakes typically passed without much fuss and they offered opportunities to learn as workers provided immediate correction or information on errors. Extract 6.9 provides an example in

which Max originated an order for mushroom soup but picked up the wrong garnish for it.

Samy's immediate correction pointed out the error and informed Max of the right garnish:

Extract 6.9

An order for mushroom soup comes in and Max scoops the soup from the pot. He picks up the garnish from the wrong container and Samy tells him the right one. (FN, Kaven's, 121005)

Mistakes in origination were rather rare and most occurred in Kaven's, the first kitchen in which Max worked; perhaps Max's inclination to originate overwhelmed him and his lack of knowledge and experience. To illustrate how mistakes in origination provided learning opportunities, we may consider our first examples. Extracts 6.1 and 6.2 are reproduced here for this discussion:

Extract 6.1

Orders for a linguine and spaghetti dish come in and Toh throws the ingredients together in a pan. Max stands by and watches. Then he retrieves the pasta from the working chiller and sets it aside near the stove where Toh was working. When Toh is done stir-frying the ingredients, he puts it aside. Toh explains that these dishes were for main courses and he was waiting for the order to 'fire' (i.e. to start cooking the ingredients with the pasta). (FN, Kaven's, 121003)

Extract 6.2

Max and I are back at Kaven's (from the split-shift break). Weng is here cooking. There are three orders waiting. Weng is the only cook here now and Max tries to help by taking out the plates from the warmer and placing them on the service table. Weng tells him it was too early to do so. Max puts the plates in the oven – the plates need to be hot when food is served on them. (FN, Kaven's, 121004)

The errors in these originations afforded the opportunity for Max to learn about practices in the kitchens. In Extract 6.1, Max originated by retrieving the pasta for Toh but he had mis-timed when the pasta was required. He had not taken into account that kitchen cooking typically involved two stages. The first was to get as much of the order ready as soon as the order came through the Micros machine. In the example in this extract, this meant frying the ingredients. The second stage had to await the instruction from the server to 'fire' the order. After originating the retrieval of the pasta, Max learned from Toh that

ingredients were prepared beforehand and the final round of cooking would be done when they received the instruction to 'fire'. This practice ensured that all orders for a table were served at the same time and at the right temperature.

In Extract 6.2, Max originated by getting the plates ready for Weng's orders but he had mis-timed the preparation of the plates. In the kitchens, steps in a work process were organised sequentially and temporally. Readyng the plates was the relevant next step but Max had yet to discern when this was to be done. When Max got the plates ready, Weng had still been cooking and the dish was not yet ready to be served. Taking the plates from the warmer and leaving them on the service table to 'wait' for the dish to be cooked would result in the plates being 'cooled' by the time they were needed for the dish. Plates should be hot when food was placed on them and served to the diners, and should be readied at the same moment or ever so slightly before the food was cooked.

Originations were advantageous when they were successful and validated – they fitted the trainee into ongoing work and presented him positively. In addition, they held value when mistakes were made by potentially affording learning opportunities. To be sure, mistakes may not always be tolerated but as we saw in Section 5.1.7, mistakes typically passed without much fuss. In the above examples, workers simply provided correction or explained when the origination should have been made. More important than mistakes, it would seem, was the trainee's inclination to *do* and contribute at work, whether through doing tasks, doing Nellie's work or origination.

6.5 Paradox and management

Given its unsolicited and autonomous character, originations did involve some risk to trainees. In most cases, Max's originations went smoothly in that no one stopped him from

chipping in or from taking kitchen tasks upon himself. But in some cases, Max was not able to originate:

Extract 6.10

Max puts on his chef's hat and apron, and stands by. He sees the foie gras being pan-fried, takes out a plate, twists some rocket leaves together and places them on the plate, ready for the foie gras to be plated. There's an order for pizza and he goes to the chiller, removes a pre-baked piece of pizza dough, puts ingredients on it and places it in the oven to bake. Max then arranges the setting for another foie gras dish. He makes another pizza and checks on the first pizza in the oven. As the orders start pouring in, Samy takes over the plating of dishes and Max steps aside. Samy gets the plates out and lays them on the service table, places the side vegetables on each plate, spoons the mashed potatoes on them and reminds Weng, who is doing all the cooking tonight, of waiting orders. Weng brings the cooked meats or fish over and places them on the plates. Then Samy pours the sauce over them and alerts servers to pick up the completed orders. Max watches by Samy's side. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

Although Max started the shift by originating the plating of orders, this role was soon taken over by Samy when orders started coming in endlessly during the busy Saturday dinner service.

Extract 6.11 provides another example in which Max, having prepared pizza orders in his first kitchen, attempted to originate pizza orders at Prome three months later. But Ryan stopped him, came over and took over the preparation of the order by spreading the ingredients on the pizza. Max successfully originated in placing the pizza into the oven. When it was ready, Ryan took over the activity by removing the pizza from the oven and serving it:

Extract 6.11

An order comes in for seafood pizza and Max gets to work. He takes a pizza out and spreads tomato sauce and cheese on it. Ryan tells him to 'pause'. Max asks him what seafood goes on the pizza. Ryan tells him 'scallops, mussels and prawns'. Max verifies with Ryan that squid is not needed. Max takes the seafood out and Ryan comes with a bowl to contain them. Then Ryan spreads the seafood on the pizza, telling Max as he does so not to spread too much tomato sauce, especially not on the edges of the pizza or the diner would get it on his fingers when he tries to lift off a piece of the pizza. As he says this, he wipes tomato sauce off the edge of the pizza. Max scoops the pizza with the pizza spatula and places it in the oven. After a

while, Ryan says the pizza is ready and he comes to the oven and removes it himself. Max stands by and watches. (FN, Prome, 130118)

Originations were at the mercy of workers. Much as trainees may desire to originate, they may not always be free to do so. Given their novice status, it is conceivable that there are constraints on how far they would be allowed to act independently. This state of affairs belies the paradox in origination. As kitchen workers involved in the business of getting orders prepared and served, they may feel compelled to make themselves useful in the production-oriented environment by originating and contributing as far as they could. However as trainees, they can be prevented from originating. Moreover they may also be led by conventional wisdom to follow instructions and do what they were told since they could inadvertently make mistakes or be perceived as being 'too smart' with their originations. The challenge posed by the paradox was to strike a balance between worker and trainee positions and to find a way to act.

Max managed his originations carefully and ably straddled the role of worker who must contribute to kitchen work and that of trainee who must abide the authority of their chefs. Extract 6.13 provides an example to illustrate. On this occasion, when an order for Pasta Aglio-Olio came through, Max did not originate in the usual manner:

Extract 6.12

There's an order for Pasta Aglio-Olio. Max picks up the ticket and asks Weng if he could fry it. Weng gives a slight nod. Max cooks the dish. (FN, Kaven's, 121009)

Max's action in this extract was unusual because he typically picked up the order and originated the task but in this instance he asked Weng for permission before originating.

But the atmosphere in the kitchen was different that day. Weng was not his usual jovial self and he looked tired. Toh had resigned and left the week before and there was no replacement yet. Samy was on his day off. Weng had worked without a day's rest for the

past few days and he was irascible. In the course of the day, Weng told Max off several times and warned him that he was looking to 'catch' him messing up. Weng also blew his top at Leonard twice. Even a server was not spared Weng's outbursts. In fact shortly after lunch service started, Weng made his first complaint against Max, telling the latter off for not keeping his work area clean.

Max's unusual pre-origination move came on the back of Weng's first complaint against him and in the face of a very stropky Weng. His permission-seeking behaviour was likely an attempt to pre-empt stepping on Weng's toes any further and it suggested Max's awareness that his originations had to be managed carefully.

6.6 Origination and legitimate presence

As mentioned in Section 6.3, through his originations, Max fitted himself into ongoing work processes. In addition, his originations secured for him a legitimate presence in the kitchens. Max's originations evolved from simple and basic kitchen tasks to sophisticated acts that claimed kitchen responsibilities. Upon originating a work activity and receiving validation on successful originations or being corrected on unsuccessful ones, Max subsequently originated whenever the work activity was required and took the activities on as his routine work responsibilities. From the peripheral position of watching the workers and playing a supportive role by doing simple tasks, Max's continued origination on increasingly more tasks carved out a valid and rightful position for him in the kitchens. I will illustrate this with reference to Max's originations in two kitchens, Kaven's (Sections 6.6.1-6.6.3) and Prome (Section 6.6.4).

6.6.1 Appropriating a vacated role

At Kaven's on Toh's last day of employment, Max was instructed by Toh to carry out part of his work on the mise-en-place i.e. the necessary tasks for getting the kitchen ready for service. Max acted on the instructions from Toh:

Extract 6.13

Max and I wait in Kaven's for Toh to arrive to start the day's work. We are early and Max remarks to me that no one was there to see that he came in early. Toh arrives 25 minutes later and immediately starts removing ingredients from the chillers, preheating the oven, removing pots and pans from the cabinets and placing them on the stoves and starting up the stoves. He asks Max to unlock the working chillers. Toh retrieves the sauces from the walk-in chiller and puts them in the bain-marie to heat them up. He tells Max to check on the freshness of the seafood in the working chiller and to drain them of the water that had melted from the ice overnight. Toh starts making the sauces and soups. (FN, Kaven's, 121004)

Over the following days until the end of his stint at Kaven's, despite there being no instruction to do this activity, Max originated doing the mise-en-place as a daily routine and carried it out at the start of every lunch shift. In addition he originated the checking of other ingredients such as vegetables needed for service and the ingredients for pizza orders:

Extract 6.14

Max and I arrive at Kaven's. Max starts working on the mise-en-place. He unlocks the working chillers. He checks the seafood in the working chiller, drains the water from the trays containing the seafood (squid, prawn, crayfish, cod and lobster) and adds ice to them. He checks the salad greens and rocket leaves to see if the vegetables are still fresh and can be served later. He checks the ingredients for the pizza at the pizza work table – tomato sauce, cheese, mushroom and onion, and replenishes the cheese. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

Max had received instructions from Toh on doing the mise-en-place and thus had not originated this activity on Toh's last day of employment (Extract 6.13). But he originated it on subsequent days without being told by anyone to do so. In these originations, Max appropriated the work role vacated by Toh and assumed it as his own.

6.6.2 Staking a claim on pizza orders and plating

We saw in Extract 6.3 earlier that Max made a mistake with the pizza order by cutting the pizza into the wrong number of slices. Not only was he not stopped by anyone in preparing that order, his resultant mistake was immediately rectified by Samy and he became aware of how the order should be prepared. Max subsequently originated pizza orders when they were received by the kitchen. On one occasion, he also received advice on how to manage multiple pizza orders:

Extract 6.15

Five other orders of pizzas arrive and Max starts to work on them. Samy and Weng come over to help him with them. Weng tells Max to note the common ingredients for the five pizzas and to place these on the pizzas first before moving on to specific toppings required for the different pizzas. He tells Max that this would make the process more efficient. (FN, Kaven's, 121005)

Before long, Max was preparing all the pizza orders, a role that Samy was performing before Max joined the kitchen.

Max also originated the plating of a foie gras order, learned exactly how to plate it and proceeded to carry out this activity whenever the kitchen received these orders. Again, this was an activity usually performed by Samy. In Extract 6.16, Max originated a foie gras order by readying a plate to prepare the setting. Weng then approached him to demonstrate the arrangement:

Extract 6.16

Max gets a plate for a foie gras order. Weng comes over and shows him how to position the brioche, rocket leaves and foie gras. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

In Extract 6.17 later in the day when we returned from the split-shift break, Max originated the plating for a subsequent order of foie gras:

Extract 6.17

Max and I are back from our break. Weng and Samy are bustling around preparing orders. Max puts on his chef's hat and apron. He sees the foie gras being pan-fried, takes out a plate, twists some rocket leaves together and places them on the plate, ready for the foie gras to be plated. (FN, Kaven's, 121006)

The tasks of preparing pizza orders and plating orders were part of Samy's work. Max's originations were attempts at doing some of this work and they staked a claim on these work tasks. Just as he had originated and appropriated Toh's work role, Max made increasingly greater claims on work responsibilities and expanded his work scope by taking on some of Samy's work.

6.6.3 Upping the ante with cooking-to-order

Max also originated with cooking orders by picking up order tickets as they came through the Micros machine. One such ticket saw Weng asking Max to pan-fry a black cod as Weng stood by, providing instructions and supervising its preparation:

Extract 6.18

Max picks up an order for black cod from the Micros machine and announces it to Weng. The latter tells him: 'You cook it la'. Max pan-fries the black cod as Weng supervises and gives instructions. (FN, Kaven's, 121004)

After the successful preparation of the black cod, Weng continued to guide and supervise Max in cooking other orders. Gradually Max was able to cook a range of dishes and when these orders were received, Max cooked them on his own. Soon, Max was cooking orders that would have been cooked by Weng. Max's competence at the cooking station was explicitly validated by Weng:

Extract 6.19

Max and Samy are doing the cooking tonight. They are standing at the cooker. Weng and I are standing away from the cooker at the pizza station. Weng remarks to Max and Samy that with them being so capable, he could go for coffee breaks and not be supervising them. He says to Max in Mandarin that Samy and him (Max) work well together and that what makes him most happy as a manager is to see that the team is able to work well together and help each other out. (FN, Kaven's, 121008)

Max started to originate soon after he started work at Kaven's. As the days unfolded, Max continued to originate and began to participate increasingly in kitchen work by doing some of the work activities of the workers. He originated the mise-en-place in Toh's absence, filling the role vacated by the latter; and he originated pizza orders and plating, in effect taking over part of Samy's work. Finally, in originating from order tickets, Max learned to cook orders and gradually did Weng's work.

Although Max continued to cut vegetables as the lowest-ranked member in the kitchen, it was significant that he was allowed to originate higher-status duties such as cooking orders. Being entrusted the responsibility of cooking marked a change in Max's social status within the kitchen environment. As Whyte observed:

Other things being equal, the employee who prepared the finished products tended to have a higher standing than one who worked at earlier stages of preparation. ... We found first that the stations themselves were socially ranked. At the top, of course, stood the range where all the cooking took place. Here were the positions that were most highly paid and considered more skilled. ... Toward the bottom were the chicken-cooking and vegetable-preparation stations. (1948:34-38)

But something more than a higher social status was also involved. From simple originations such as retrieving pasta from the drawer (Extract 6.1) and readying plates (Extract 6.2), Max began originating the work of other workers and made these tasks his own by doing them on a routine basis. In doing so, he staked claims on work responsibilities and carved out a work role for himself. Increasingly, he fitted himself into work processes and the work setting, and constructed a legitimate presence in the kitchen. Through his originations, Max gained a foothold in the setting and occupied a valid and rightful position within it, not unlike a bona fide worker in the kitchen.

6.6.4 Staking a claim on satay orders

Extracts 6.20-6.23 provide examples of a series of originations at Prome. Through the originations, Max took on the role of 'satay cook' and claimed a legitimate presence in this

kitchen. Max's first origination on satay orders occurred during his first lunch service at Prome where having read the order ticket, he originated by retrieving the satay from the chiller and placing it on the pan to cook:

Extract 6.20

Max leaves the pizza station where he had been learning from Marvin to open up the pizza dough and goes to look at the order that just came in. It is for satay. Max takes the satay out from the working chiller and puts them on the pan. Ryan takes over and Max watches by his side. (Prome, 130115)

During dinner service that same day, Max originated again, this time in plating the satay while Aaron cooked the order:

Extract 6.21

An order comes in for 12 chicken and 12 beef satay. Max prepares the plates and settings and Aaron pan-fries the satay. When the dishes are ready, Max takes them to Shane at the service counter and the latter sends them out. (FN, Prome, 130115)

These early originations on satay orders were peripheral to cooking. In Extract 6.20, he retrieved the satay but whether or not he intended to originate further, Ryan took over the cooking of the order; and in Extract 6.21, Max prepared the plates as Aaron cooked the satay.

A few days later, in Aaron's absence and as Ryan cooked a pasta order, Max originated fully on an order of satay – cooking and plating the order:

Extract 6.22

1410h. Max prepares an order of satay. He places the satay on the hot pan. After a while, he puts them in the deep-fryer. He takes out a plate and does the setting – cucumber, onions and rice cake. He places the satay on the plate and takes it to the service counter. (FN, Prome, 130118)

Max's first originations (Extracts 6.20 and 6.21) were part of doing the order i.e. retrieving the satay and plating the order but these were peripheral to the main activity of cooking the satay to get the order processed. These originations were simple and basic.

In Extract 6.22 though, he originated the entire order and the origination was validated. The order was sent out without comment from the aboyeur and without it being returned by the diners, both of which would have invalidated Max's origination had they taken place. During dinner shift that day and subsequently, Max cooked and plated the satay orders received by Prome. In Extract 6.23, Max reported at Prome, picked up the order for satay and worked on it independently:

Extract 6.23

1800h. Max reports at Prome and heads for the Western section. An order comes in for chicken satay and Max puts six sticks on the hot pan. He dips them into the deep-fryer and then puts them back on the hot pan. He takes out a plate, places onions, cucumber and ketupat on it, and finally the satay and brings it to the service table. (FN, Prome, 130122)

Max began with simple originations on the satay orders and watched by the side of workers who cooked those orders. Subsequently he originated successfully on a satay order and continued to originate the orders when they were received by the kitchen. With his originations, he staked a claim on the particular work role of cooking the satay orders, fitted himself into the work situation and established a legitimate presence in Prome, just as he had done at Kaven's as we saw earlier.

In the first two sections of this chapter, I defined and described the concept of origination. Following that, I discussed the enactment of the action as Max worked in the kitchens. Successful originations were validated by workers and unsuccessful ones afforded learning opportunities. A paradox in origination, where trainees were concerned, was highlighted. Max's originations fitted him into work activities and produced him as a productive worker, reshaping his participation from a bystander to an almost-bona fide worker. The originations evolved from simple and basic kitchen tasks to sophisticated acts that claimed kitchen responsibilities and secured Max's legitimate presence in the kitchens. We turn now to considering origination in the broader context of restaurant work.

6.7 Origination as an imperative

Separately, a restaurant owner, a chef at TVC and Max's former college lecturer who had practical experience of working in the industry suggested that origination was expected in the restaurant industry. Moreover, when origination was not forthcoming, workers responded negatively to trainees and as one trainee revealed (see below), their negative response affected his work morale. Origination also appeared to be an industry practice.

It must be said that origination was not the term that was used by the individuals whose views are presented below. But in the descriptions of actions expected of trainees in the kitchens, something very close to, if not indeed origination itself, may be inferred.

George and Nurul

George was the owner of HS. Two weeks after the trainees started work, I dropped in on them and met George who talked to me about the trainees. George complained about their attitude, poor attendance at work and their failure to originate:

Extract 6.24

Among the complaints [George] had about the trainees was that he expected them to look out for things to do in the kitchen instead of simply standing around. He said that he had to 'push them' to work and singled out [Nurul] as being 'inside kitchen like standing there nothing to do', adding that he planned to observe her for a few more days before deciding what to do with her. (FN, HS, 121205)

As George reveals, he expected the trainees to originate (to look out for things to do in the kitchen instead of simply standing around). Nurul was singled out as being 'inside kitchen like standing there nothing to do' and was at risk of being sacked. After hearing from George, I casually mentioned to Nurul what George had told me and suggested some activities that she could originate. Nurul was surprised by George's comments and had been unaware of his expectations. She assumed that she would be given tasks to do and when none was assigned, she assumed that she was not required to do anything.

Nurul soon originated by looking out for tasks to be done in the kitchen and carrying them out. A few weeks later, I chatted with George again and found he had revised his assessment of Nurul. He said she had improved in her attitude and work performance, and that she was more engaged with work, adding that she actively looked for tasks in the kitchen even washing dishcloths in lull periods. He appeared to be suitably impressed and remarked that he might hire her as a full-timer after the work placement.

Trevor

Like Nurul, another trainee Trevor also had a difficult start at his placement kitchen. His experience reveals the negative response from kitchen workers towards a lack of origination and the emotional effect this had on his work morale.

In a chat about two months after he started work, Trevor reported feeling disillusioned, upset and frustrated with work. He was not getting along with the workers at his placement kitchen and was increasingly feeling unmotivated to turn up for work. As we discussed the challenges he faced at work, Trevor revealed that he had been reprimanded for not originating. Unlike Nurul, Trevor appeared to be aware that he should be *doing* something but blamed his failure to do so on not knowing what had to be done (lines 3-4):

Extract 6.25 'They scold me' (INT, Trevor, 121125)

- | | | |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | YN | But why do you let [the other workers] bother you? Can't you just |
| 2 | | do your work? |
| 3 | Trevor | <u>If I don't do anything, they scold me. Because I also don't know</u> |
| 4 | | <u>what to do.</u> |
| 5 | YN | <u>You mean they don't come and tell you, eh, do this, do that.</u> |
| 6 | Trevor | ((Shakes head.)) Then sometimes feel very useless la. Aiya, I don't |
| 7 | | know la. <u>I feel myself in the attachment I feel like I'm very useless.</u> |

Although they might do so, kitchen workers did not always direct trainees to work activities or assigned them tasks to do. My question (actually an accusation that Trevor was finding excuses for not turning up for work) in lines 1-2 assumed that he would have been given

work to do and should focus on this rather than be worked up over his co-workers. Trevor's response to my accusation was to shift the blame for his truancy on the workers. He revealed that he was reprimanded when he did not do anything and accounted for it by saying that he did not know what had to be done (lines 3-4). I continued with my assumption and explicitly asked if workers assigned him work tasks (line 5). Trevor responded in the negative and commented on feeling 'useless' at work (line 7).

My assumption had been wrong: work was not normally assigned to trainees. Yet there seemed to be an expectation that trainees were actively engaged in some kind of *doing*. Trevor in fact figured this out when he said in line 3, 'If I don't do anything, they scold me' but appeared to be helpless over how to fix the situation ('Because I also don't know what to do').

The question raised by Trevor's experience was, what ought they to *do*, if no instruction on tasks was provided? Evidently trainees had to find some way to generate work and to fit themselves into work activities i.e. to originate. Nurul had not done so, having not been aware that it was required. Trevor appeared to be aware of the need for origination but nonetheless failed to originate. Clearly Trevor had not taken the actions that had seemed so natural to Max. Trevor's comment in lines 3-4 that he did not know what had to be done suggests that whilst kitchen workers had not provided direction, Trevor himself had failed to observe work activities and find a way of contributing to them, which was what Max had done. Trevor's failure to originate then resulted in not having any work to do, being reprimanded for not doing work and a sense of dread towards working.

Trevor and Nurul's experiences provide evidence of the expectation for origination: trainees were expected to engage in some form of *doing* even when instruction was not forthcoming and work tasks not assigned; in other words, they were expected to originate i.e. generate work for themselves and carry it out. As we saw, there were negative

consequences with the failure to do so: Nurul was at risk of being sacked and Trevor was reprimanded and suffered a period of much frustration and disillusionment with work.

Shane, Kyle and Max

Shane was a sous chef at Prome at TVC. He was also a former lecturer of the trainees at college. Extract 6.26 is excerpted from a conversation I had with him in which one of the topics was the work performance of the trainees. Shane commented negatively on Kyle's work and one of his complaints was the latter's failure to originate. In the extract, Shane related an incident to illustrate. Shane had instructed Kyle to cut the vegetables in the preparation hours prior to service. But when service commenced and the kitchen started to get busy, Shane's expectation was for Kyle to originate ('you help to take bowl, help to take plate, this kind of thing') and help out with service:

Extract 6.26

For me ar, you know, I want to how to say influence them ar. It's that when you're doing your mise-en-place outside fucking busy... Doesn't mean that you don't care you know! Mise-en-place you put down, you help to take bowl, help to take plate, this kind of thing. I told Kyle wat, you know, I say you help the Indian side cut things because, you know, they need someone to cut busy wat, so he cut. Our whole place is so fucking busy- whoa! It's like, you know? Did I- did I- you know, teach something wrong or whatever, you know? (REC, Maurie's, 121114)

On the other hand, Max won praise from Shane for his inclination to originate. Comparing Max to the other trainees, Shane had remarked that Max was 'automatic':

Extract 6.27

I've seen the way that he works la, you know? He is a very automatic guy ar, you know. At least the automatic button is on la, you know. (FN, Maurie's, 121114)

By 'automatic', Shane meant that 'example, if I were about to finish cooking fried rice, he will place a plate for me without me having to ask him to do so' (Facebook message, 140218). In addition to fitting one into work activities and securing their legitimate presence in the kitchens, originations projected the trainee extremely positively in the eyes

of others. On the other hand, the lack of origination as we saw with Nurul, Trevor and Kyle created negative impressions of the trainees.

Gina

The trainees' lecturer at college, Gina had almost 20 years of work experience in the catering industry and was an executive chef at a major hotel chain before joining the college. In an interview prior to the work placement, she stressed the importance of being pro-active in the kitchen. Extract 6.28 is excerpted from our conversation:

Extract 6.28

You must be pro-active ar. Don't just stand there like a robot: only move when people ask you to move. Because kitchen is a very different environment. Compare, if you can see, compare to office, retail or some other trades ar, it's totally different. (INT, Gina, 120910)

Later, sharing her concerns for Shahidah whom she thought would face difficulties at work placement, Gina provided a general idea of what being pro-active involved:

Extract 6.29 'You cannot stand there you know?' (INT, Gina, 120910)

- 1 Gina [Shahidah] is uh...she felt inferior...of herself. She always thinks she
- 2 is not good. She got a twin sister who is totally the opposite of
- 3 her, very active, very outgoing. And she is like uh, a bit slow,
- 4 uhm, not very pro-active ar, you got to push her to do something.
- 5 She will just stand there and look, you know.
- 6 YN And you mentioned that being pro-active is quite important in
- 7 the kitchen.
- 8 Gina Ya, ya, ya, ya, ya. You cannot stand there, you know? Like I say,
- 9 kitchen is very fast ar. You [should not wait for] people come and
- 10 push you, eh you do this, eh you do that. Where got time? Then at
- 11 the end of the day, people say, eh why stand there? You're of no
- 12 use wat, you know. So, yah, my main concern.

Gina worried for Shahidah because the latter was 'not very pro-active' and had to be '[pushed] to do something' (line 4) or she would 'just stand there and look' (line 5). She reiterated her earlier point about standing around ('You must be pro-active ar. Don't just stand there like a robot: only move when people ask you to move', Extract 6.28) and

elaborated on it. She stated that one should not merely stand around ('cannot [should not] stand there', line 8) and wait for workers to provide directions on work that had to be done ('You [should not wait for] people come and push you, eh you do this, eh you do that', lines 9-10) because hardly anyone had the time to do that ('Where got time', line 10). She suggested that if one behaved in the manner just described, they would be construed as being redundant ('You're of no use wat', lines 11-12). Incidentally, we have already seen this sense of being redundant when Trevor mentioned feeling 'useless' because he was not doing any work in the kitchens (line 7, Extract 6.25).

Gina did not elaborate precisely on what 'being pro-active' involved but its specific details might be found in origination. Gina stated that not being pro-active was 'standing there like a robot: only move when people ask you to move' (Extract 6.28), having to be pushed to work (Extract 6.29) and waiting to be instructed on work to be done (Extract 6.29). This non-proactive behaviour is directly antithetical to origination which involves self-directed voluntary actions that contribute meaningfully to work activities; put another way, being pro-active appears to be synonymous with origination. In fact the sense of 'being pro-active' described by Gina may be the attitude that underlies origination. 'Being pro-active' is the general attitude for the particular and necessary action of origination in the kitchen; and the details of this attitude are fleshed out by and implemented through origination.

Daryl

Finally it would also appear that origination was not merely an expectation placed on trainees but an industry practice. A trainee at another placement kitchen, Daryl, reported an example of group origination: workers would 'try to find things to do' in the kitchen ('Then when there're nothing to do anymore, we will try to find things to do like clean the kitchen, pack the kitchen...', lines 3-5):

Extract 6.30 'We will try to find things to do' (INT, Daryl, 121115)

- 1 YN And they treat you like a full-timer. They trust you to do your own work.
2 Daryl Ya. The only time they ask me to hurry is when it's really urgent la. If
3 not, everybody just do their stuff. Then when there're nothing to do
4 anymore, we will try to find things to do like clean the kitchen, pack the
5 kitchen, really trying to make the kitchen a nice place for everybody ar.

Rather than a choice, origination was an imperative in the professional kitchen. The nature of the work environment and the lack of explicit direction on work tasks compelled it. Furthermore it was expected by industry practitioners and was an industry practice itself. Industry practitioners such as George, Shane and Gina made this evident in my conversations with them and the experiences of trainees Nurul, Trevor and Daryl suggested as much. Finally non-origination was not well-regarded and constructed negative impressions of trainees. Origination on the other hand provided trainees with clear advantages in fitting into and establishing themselves in the work setting as well as creating positive impressions, as Max's experience showed.

In the foregoing sections, I defined and described the concept of origination as well as discussed its enactment in practice and its importance to trainees working in the professional kitchen. In the last of these, I also explained how 'being pro-active' is closely related to origination. But the discussion of this concept is not complete without reference to another expression that appears close in meaning to origination. The following section discusses the difference between origination and 'taking the initiative', and further fleshes out the concept of origination.

6.8 Origination and 'taking the initiative'

It may be suggested that origination is no different from 'taking the initiative'. In this section, I explain how origination differs from 'taking the initiative'. An incident from college provides illustration.

It is perhaps worth noting that origination is not something that may be found in the college context. The concept emerged in the context of a work environment where explicit instruction was not always provided. At college, students were guided through explicitly given, step-by-step instructions and tasks.

Unlike 'taking the initiative', which may be used quite generally, origination is governed by certain constraints and has a bounded character. This may be illustrated by an incident in which Zachary has taken the initiative to create his own method of preparing a dish. In the following extract, Daryl poses a question to Gina about separating the ingredients on the surface of the steamed egg custard (line 1). Gina answers the question by referring to what Zachary did (lines 6-7):

Extract 6.31 'He steamed his egg first' (REC, Japanese Cuisine Theory, 120726)

- | | | |
|---|-------|--|
| 1 | Daryl | Why the ingredient cannot separate on top ar? |
| 2 | Gina | Can. |
| 3 | Daryl | Huh? |
| 4 | Gina | Can. |
| 5 | Daryl | Can ar? |
| 6 | Gina | Uh, that day, Zachary, he steamed his egg first, then he |
| 7 | | lined his uh, so-called uh, ingredients on top and it's very nice. |

Unlike Daryl who prepared the dish based on Gina's demonstration which had the ingredients embedded in the egg custard, Zachary voluntarily and under no direction from Gina carried out his own way of preparing the dish so that the ingredients were on the surface of the egg custard. Zachary's actions were a clear example of 'taking the initiative' to develop a procedure that suited his intentions.

But origination is not appropriate here. Firstly Zachary's actions occurred in the context of college and were not contributing to work activities in the work environment. Furthermore, there is an implicit sense of freedom in Zachary's actions that is denied in origination. In 'taking the initiative', Zachary could choose to do something differently but in origination,

the trainee is not expected to be different; his or her actions ought to be the same as any other actor in that position in order to ensure that work gets done and done in a particular way. To appear competent in origination was to be able to do just as others did and abide by the accepted practice.

For example, when Max originated a simultaneous order of five pizzas, he was advised by a worker to place similar ingredients on all five pizzas before returning to each one and adding other specific ingredients to them. In subsequent originations on such orders, Max performed the task in the way he was instructed. Whether or not the end result would turn out to be the same if Max originated differently was beside the point. To originate competently was to perform the activity in the way that it was typically done in the kitchens. In other words, in origination, Max was not free to perform the activity any way he liked or differently from another worker in his position.

Although both 'taking the initiative' and 'origination' were voluntary and self-determining, the latter was not free of constraints. It served a specific purpose of contributing to work activities. Moreover it was self-determining and free only to the extent that one could determine *to act*; having done so, one had to select within the realm of available actions those which were appropriate to the work at hand and act in the manner in which that work should be carried out. Whilst 'taking the initiative' is open in terms of outcomes, origination is clearly circumscribed.

6.9 Origination in the kitchen world

As we have seen, origination was a way for trainees to contribute to work and moreover it afforded learning opportunities. Furthermore it was an imperative for working in the kitchens. Origination provided clear advantages and created positive impressions. It also potentially fostered good relations with co-workers. Kitchens were open work

environments where everyone could see what others did, and the sight of trainees not engaging with work while one was overwhelmed with orders and struggling to cope could easily breed ill-feeling and animosity. On the other hand, through origination, trainees could at least show themselves to be willing contributors to work activities and gain the trust of co-workers; as Fine has observed, novice cooks 'must demonstrate that they are sufficiently trustworthy to be co-workers' (1996b:93). Not originating, not doing any work and not contributing in any way did little to build this trust and in fact only created negative impressions.

In this chapter, I explored a specific action which I adapted from Whyte's concept of origination. The concept was an 'abstraction' without substantive content in Whyte (1949) and the writer had urged further research to determine its value. For me, the concept of origination with some modification affords practical purchase for the description of a specific action recovered from trainees' experience in the professional kitchen.

In the preceding discussion, I defined and described the concept of origination, an unsolicited and autonomous action of generating work for oneself that was targeted at contributing to the work situation. I discussed the enactment of origination in practice, suggesting how it fitted individuals into work activities, afforded learning opportunities and was a resource through which one's legitimate presence in the work setting was established. The discussion was then expanded to the broader context of the restaurant industry where I highlighted the importance of origination for trainees by drawing on insights from the experiences of trainees in other placement kitchens and the views of industry practitioners. An industry expectation and practice, origination also served to project positive impressions for the trainee. Finally the discussion concluded with an explanation of the relationship between origination and its close semantic equivalent,

'taking the initiative'. In contrast to the latter, origination was strictly circumscribed in the context of its emergence as well as its outcomes.

Origination, like the actions of doing and watching, was prompted very much by the embodied nature of work in the professional kitchen. Given that talk is generally accepted as a form of action, where did it fit in this action-oriented context of overwhelming physicality? This question will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 7 Talk

Given the embodied nature of kitchen work, much of trainees' activity in the kitchens involved the actions of doing and watching. In the preceding chapters, I described aspects of trainees' experience as they engaged in those actions. A third action, origination, was also uncovered and its importance for working in the professional kitchen was discussed. In this chapter, we turn to talk as a form of action and explore its place in the placement experience. I begin with a description of the general nature of worker-trainee talk and following that, present interactions which deviated from the general patterns and provided learning opportunities. A distinction is made between transactional and instructional relationships; the former was generally concerned with instructions to accomplish tasks whilst the latter covered a broader range of relevant and useful information for working as a professional cook. I explore the building of this latter relationship between a worker and trainee. It will also be seen that, although it may have been the worker's inclination to take on a mentoring role with the trainee, the trainee's actions were no less crucial in encouraging learning opportunities.

7.1 Talk with trainees

7.1.1 Contexts for talk

Overwhelmingly workers' talk with trainees involved directing trainees to tasks and providing instruction on those tasks. These interactions were typically initiated by workers and involved directives and brief instructions. Instead of verbal exchanges, the interactions often consisted of single verbal turns with workers' verbal actions eliciting trainees' physical actions. In these interactions, the adjacency action pairings were verbal-physical rather than verbal-verbal in talk.

The three most common and recurrent contexts for talk involved task assignation, remedial instruction on incorrect actions and instruction on kitchen techniques and procedures. In the first type of interaction, workers directed trainees to kitchen tasks that the latter was required to do. The instruction is conveyed through directives, which were imperative in structure, direct and explicit (Holmes and Stubbe 2003:31). In Extract 7.1, Ryan directed Max to wash the ladle. His instruction consisted of the action required and the object to be acted on. In response, Max carried out the physical action that was elicited by the worker's single verbal turn:

Extract 7.1

Ryan goes to the pizza work table and wipes it clean. He picks up a ladle and passes it to Max: 'Take this and wash it'. Max takes the ladle, washes it at the sink and returns to stand beside Ryan. (FN, Prome, 130118)

Many such interactions involved ad-hoc tasks that trainees carried out on workers' behalf as the latter focused on their ongoing activities as well as routine kitchen tasks. The latter interactions were similar in form. In Extract 7.2, Peter assigned Max the task of processing the mushrooms. Like Ryan in the above extract, Peter's instruction was a directive consisting of the physical actions required ('get', 'cut' 'put') and the object to be acted on ('mushrooms'). In response, Max carried out the relevant physical actions – taking the mushrooms from the chiller and proceeding to cut them:

Extract 7.2

Peter tells Max to remove the mushrooms and to slice them, before storing them in the chiller again: 'Get the mushrooms, cut (them) and put them back (here)'. Max takes the mushrooms out to the cutting station and starts slicing them. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

A second type of interaction occurred when trainees were corrected on their actions. Often these interactions involved a single verbal turn, typically a comment on trainees' actions which provided information on the correct actions. In Extract 7.3, Weng commented on Max's inappropriate handling of the lobster shells (in effect, an admonition and an

injunction to adopt the former's advice) by stating that he had told Max a number of times how the shells should be handled and Max had failed to act on his advice:

Extract 7.3

Max removes the lobster shells from the oven with his hands. The shells are hot and brittle. Max holds them gingerly. As he is about to place them on the plate, one of them breaks up and half the shell crashes to the floor. Weng sees this, sighs and tells him: 'That's why I always tell you to use tong, use a plate, use a piece of cloth'. (FN, Kaven's, 121012)

Similarly in Extract 7.4, Mei commented on Max's inappropriate action of wiping the chopping board with a piece of cloth by instructing him on the correct procedure (washing the chopping board with detergent):

Extract 7.4

Max gets a red chopping board to slice the bacon. He uses a piece of cloth to wipe the chopping board. Mei [chef de partie] sees this and tells him: 'Have to wash. Cannot simply wipe it. Use soap to wash'. Max smiles sheepishly and goes to wash the chopping board (FN, Maurie's, 130108)

A third type of interaction involved instruction on kitchen requirements, techniques and procedures. This was typically conveyed through a physical demonstration which may involve minimal talk or none at all. In Extract 7.5, Peter directed Max to dice the carrots. He then proceeded with a physical demonstration that did not involve any verbal instructions. He only spoke again to instruct Max to work on the rest of the carrots when the demonstration was concluded:

Extract 7.5

Peter tells Max to dice the carrots: 'Come cut this.' He takes a carrot, halves it and slices the halves into strips. He lines the strips parallel to each other and cuts them into cubes. He tells Max to carry on with the rest: 'Finish the rest' and leaves. (FN, Joai Asian, 121016)

Generally, talk was initiated by workers and focused on providing instruction – assigning tasks, correcting actions, how-to procedures for carrying out tasks. It was often minimal,

taking the form of directives and brief comments. In many cases of physical demonstration to show how-to procedures, talk was even precluded.

To be sure, there were occasions of talk that did not focus on providing instruction e.g. social chit-chat. These events were far fewer, occurring infrequently and taking place with only a few individuals. Notably these occasions often involved ongoing conversations between workers and me, to which trainees joined as the interaction progressed. For reasons of space, I have prioritised interactions that were more frequent and that involved only workers and trainees.

7.1.2 Trainees' actions in talk

Part of the reason for the minimal talk was the absence of trainees' verbal responses. These were not elicited by workers in the interactions. Instead, trainees' physical actions were elicited and they responded accordingly.

Some exceptions occurred when trainees provided acknowledgement, sought clarification or made information requests. Whilst these actions resulted in a verbal exchange, talk remained fairly minimal in the interaction.

Extract 7.6 illustrates the making of a clarification request which produced a verbal exchange. Max had made an earlier trip to the receiving department to collect the deliveries but some of the fresh produce arrived late and a second trip was now necessary. Directed by Paul to collect the day's deliveries ('store'), Max requested for clarification through a confirmation-formatted request ('Store ar?'). Paul provided the confirmation (turn-initial 'Ar') and added further instructions to Max to bring the trolley with him:

Extract 7.6

A call comes in from Jo. There are more stores to be collected. Paul tells Max to pick them up. Paul: 'Max, go and get store'. Max: Store ar? Paul: 'Ar. Take the trolley with you'. Max: Orh↓. (FN, Maurie's, 121127)

Trainees' information requests also produced verbal exchanges. An example is provided in Extract 7.7 in which Max who was watching Ryan cook the side vegetables initiated information requests on the latter's actions:

Extract 7.7 'Add a little oil' (REC, Prome, 130115)

17:12-17:13	1	Ryan	Add a little oil first.	
17:33-17:35	2	Ryan	Add a little oil will do, not too much.	
17:41-17:48	3	Ryan	Why is oil necessary leh? (inaudible)	
	4		Without oil ar, it'd be difficult to fry.	
18:41-18:42	5	Max	This is all right already ar?	Sequence 1
	6	Ryan	Ar.	
18:48-18:53	7	Ryan	Because later when they go into the	
	8		oven, they'd be cooked. Can't cook them	
	9		fully. Cooked fully ar (they'll) shrivel ar	
	10		and be ruined ar.	
18:56-19:00	11	Max	Colour ar?	Sequence 2
	12	Ryan	Mmm colour not too burnt.	
19:14 -19:15	13	Ryan	Have to add some oil. Without oil ar	
	14		very hard to fry.	
19:58-20:00	15	Max	Have to be one portion by one portion	Sequence 3
	16		ar?	
	17	Ryan	Ar one portion by one portion.	
20:06-20:09	18	Ryan	Later when you take it, you take a	
	19		portion each time mah. Don't have to	
	20		look for it right?	

Ryan commented on his action of adding oil to the pan (line 1), pointing out that only a little oil was needed (line 2) and explaining why oil was necessary (lines 3-4). The following three sequences (lines 5-10, 11-12 and 15-20) were initiated by Max to request information and they extended the interaction.

It is worth noting that whilst Max was seeking information, he designed all three information requests as confirmation requests with the discourse particle 'ar' ('This is all right already ar?' line 5, 'Colour ar?' line 11 and 'Have to be one portion by one portion ar?' line 15). Equally interesting are Ryan's responses which oriented not only to the explicit confirmation requests but seemed to address inexplicit, unexpressed information requests too. Each of Ryan's responses provided the requested confirmation ('Ar', line 6; 'Mmm', line 12; 'Ar', line 17) as well as further details (lines 7-10, line 12 and lines 18-20).

The first sequence occurred almost a minute after Ryan closed the earlier information-giving sequence on the necessity of adding oil. In line 5, Max made a confirmation request on Ryan's actions as the latter scooped the semi-cooked vegetables from the pan ('This is all right already ar?', line 5). Ryan responded to the request by providing the confirmation ('Ar', line 6) and accounting for his actions with an explanation for not cooking the vegetables longer (lines 7-10).

A few seconds later, Max initiated a second sequence (lines 11-14). He acted to determine the degree to which the vegetables should be semi-cooked by seeking confirmation that the basis for this was the colour change in the vegetables ('Colour ar?' line 11). Ryan provided the requested confirmation ('Mmm', line 12) and elaborated on the degree of colour change ('colour not too burnt', line 12).

The final sequence (lines 15-20) occurred as Max watched Ryan divide the vegetables into separate portions comprising eggplant, zucchini and capsicum in each portion. He initiated another confirmation request on this practice ('Have to be one portion by one portion ar?', lines 15-16) and in response, Ryan provided the requested confirmation ('Ar', line 17), restated the assumption made by Max ('one portion by one portion', line 17) and accounted for it with an explanation for the practice (lines 18-20).

When trainees sought clarification, provided acknowledgement and made information requests, verbal exchanges ensued. But these exchanges depended on the trainee's actions in bringing them about. In other words, the responsibility of extending and sustaining these interactions and hence over-writing the minimal nature of talk rested on the trainee. In the above extract, it was Max's actions in initiating sequences and making information requests that led to the continuity of the interaction. Had he not done so, talk would close down returning us to situations of minimal talk.

7.1.3 Talk and the physical nature of work

The fact of minimal talk in worker-trainee interactions reflects the emphasis on embodied action in the kitchens. Given the objective of the kitchens to produce food, which entailed the doing of tasks, workers' interactions with trainees focused on eliciting the latter's actions in accomplishing tasks in food production. The interactions provided instruction on tasks (assigning tasks, correcting actions, procedures for tasks) and workers' verbal actions were directed at eliciting trainees' physical actions.

On their part, trainees responded by carrying out the relevant actions, often with no questions asked, literally and figuratively. In effect, workers and trainees mutually constructed the context of minimal talk and matter-of-factly oriented to talk as a tool, or 'a means to an end' (Holmes and Stubbe 2003:26) that enabled the work-related physical actions to take place.

Furthermore, talk-as-tool is made maximally efficient by stripping it to its most economical form with instructions being brief, direct, explicit and rarely involving interpersonal markers often found in workplace discourse (Koester 2006:104). Writers have shown that 'being direct' and the use of imperatives are features in workplace contexts where power relationships were 'clear and uncontested' (Holmes and Stubbe 2003, Bernstein 1998). This is certainly the case here between the workers and trainees. At the same time though, the directness in instruction was also 'normal' talk to facilitate getting things done – unembellished, bare and efficient.

Related to the notion of talk-as-tool is the fact that workers tended not to rely on talk as a pedagogical resource. We have already seen in Extract 7.5 that Peter's physical demonstration did not involve verbal instructions. That demonstration of dicing carrots was rather straightforward and it might be suggested that verbal instructions were not

necessary. Extract 7.8 provides an example of a physical demonstration involving a more complex procedure – removing the breast meat from ducks. The procedure involved at the very least knowing how to handle the duck, positioning one’s knife and locating specific parts of the duck to make the cuts in order to cleanly remove the breast meats and avoid wastage:

Extract 7.8 ‘Duck breasts’ (REC, Maurie’s, 121114)

- | | | |
|----|------|--|
| 1 | Paul | This is this you give me::: twelve |
| 2 | | twelve twelve breasts (2s.) twelve breasts |
| 3 | | ar? (2s.) Twelve breasts ar ↑? |
| 4 | Max | Twelve ar? |
| 5 | Paul | Ar ↓ Then hor (21s.) after this huh? (5s.) |
| 6 | | The back that thing on the back ar? |
| 7 | Max | Ar. |
| 8 | Paul | Hor? (6s.) Okay? (4s.) Okay done (3s.) so |
| 9 | | (inaudible) (8s.) so when that’s done ar |
| 10 | | put everything in the chiller ar ↑. |
| 11 | Max | Which one? |
| 12 | Paul | The breasts. |
| 13 | Max | Okay. |

Paul’s verbal instructions occurred mostly at the beginning and the end of this interaction (lines 1-3 and lines 9-13, respectively). In the former, Paul informed Max about the number of breast meats he required and in the latter, he instructed Max on storing the breast meats in the chiller. Neither of these sections of the interaction involved explicitly the instruction for ‘how to remove the breast meats of ducks’ which was, to use terms from the classroom, the theme of the lesson.

Instruction was delivered in a physical demonstration. Paul’s demonstration (lines 5-9) occurred over at least 39 seconds with the bulk of it involving Paul’s physical actions of removing the breast meat from the duck and little verbal instruction. His verbal utterances consisted of a check for understanding (‘the back that thing on the back ar?’, line 6) to which Max acknowledged with ‘Ar’ (line 7), several procedural comments (‘Then hor’ and ‘after this huh’, line 5), two further checks for understanding (‘Hor?’ and ‘Okay?’ line 8) and

a final comment at the end of the demonstration ('Okay done', line 8). Paul's physical actions were treated as self-explanatory and Max was expected to receive instruction through watching.

In general, talk in worker-trainee interactions was minimal. Interactions were overwhelmingly work-oriented and centred on assigning tasks, correcting actions and conveying instruction on techniques and procedures for carrying out those tasks. On their part, the trainees responded by physically carrying out the instructed activities. In some cases, trainees extended the interactions when they sought clarification, acknowledged the instruction and made information requests. Talk in this context may be construed as a tool and 'a means to an end'. It was deployed as a tool for enabling the embodied action to take place and was supplementary to it. In many cases of physical demonstrations of techniques and procedures, talk was even precluded.

7.2 Transactional and instructional relationships

Interactions with most workers may be characterised as 'transactional' and 'unidirectional' (Koester 2006:32) and the relevant relationships between these workers and trainees described as 'transactional'. These interactions aimed at eliciting something from trainees – their physical actions for task accomplishment. Trainees responded to the transaction by performing the required physical actions.

A few workers however oriented differently to the trainees. Instead of merely transacting with trainees for their physical actions, they oriented to trainees' learning needs. These interactions involved extensive talk in which trainees' verbal actions, not merely their physical ones, were elicited. Though the interactions were similarly directed at providing instruction on tasks, workers' verbal actions were nurturing, sensitive and oriented to the trainee as a learner. In what follows, I compare interactions between Max and two

different workers on the same task of cutting pumpkins to illustrate the nature of interactions within a transactional and 'instructional' relationship, the latter a term I use to refer to the more nurturing, learner-oriented worker-trainee relationship.

Extract 7.9 shows an interaction between Max and Steven in which the latter physically demonstrated a procedure on a task. Like most workers, Steven's relationship with Max was transactional: his verbal interactions with Max mainly involved the assignation of tasks and instruction provision when this was necessary. In this extract, Steven assigned Max the task of cutting pumpkins and provided a physical demonstration to show how the activity was to be carried out:

Extract 7.9 'Come cut pumpkin' (REC, Garde manger, 121031)

- | | | |
|----|--------|---|
| 1 | Steven | Come cut pumpkin ((Cuts a pumpkin as |
| 2 | | Max watches by his side. Steven saws |
| 3 | | away at the skin and removes it before |
| 4 | | halving the pumpkin. He pauses to look |
| 5 | | for a spoon.)) Is there a spoon (there)? |
| 6 | Max | Yes there is one ((passes the spoon to |
| 7 | | Steven)) |
| 8 | Steven | ((Takes the spoon and scrapes out the |
| 9 | | fibres on the inside of the pumpkin. He |
| 10 | | cuts the pumpkin into a number of pieces |
| 11 | | and with one piece, he cuts it into wedges |
| 12 | | wedges. He passes the knife to Max.)) |
| 13 | | You cut all of them first then scrape. It |
| 14 | | should be that you cut everything first= |
| 15 | Max | =Cut first then scrape all at once |
| 16 | Steven | After scraping hor then cut the third step. |
| 17 | | Then hor () everything done already hor |
| 18 | | add sugar and oil. |
| 19 | Max | Add sugar and oil ar? |
| 20 | Steven | Sugar and oil. |

Steven began the interaction by summoning Max ('Come', line 1) and directing the latter to the task of cutting pumpkins ('cut pumpkin', line 1). He then demonstrated how the task should be carried out (lines 1-4) during which no utterances were made. His search for a spoon (lines 4-5) interrupted the demonstration and broke the silence. He made an

information request on the availability of a spoon at the section of the work counter near Max (line 5). Max responded verbally and handed Steven the spoon (lines 6-7). Steven resumed the demonstration (lines 8-12), again with no words exchanged until the end of the demonstration when he passed the knife to Max. He instructed Max to cut all the pumpkins before scraping out the fibres (lines 13-14) to which Max produced a reformulation to display his understanding (line 15). Steven then instructed him to marinate the pumpkin wedges in sugar and oil (lines 17-18). Max made a clarification request (line 19) and Steven repeated his instruction (line 20).

This interaction was typical of transactional relationships: Steven provided instruction to enable Max to carry out the required task. As was usual with instruction on procedures and techniques, Steven provided instruction through a physical demonstration. Equally typical was the fact that his physical actions took the place of verbal instructions and were treated as self-explanatory. Talk was minimal, occurring before and after the demonstration, and comprised instructions for the accomplishment of the task (lines 13-20).

In contrast, Shankar's interaction with Max on the same task involved extensive talk that took into account Max's novice status and the lack of familiarity with the task. Max in turn contributed actively:

Extract 7.10 'Maybe you try this method' (REC, Garde manger, 121102)

- | | | |
|----|---------|---|
| 1 | Shankar | No. Maybe come I teach you. That is chef teach you |
| 2 | | right? Different people have different method. Maybe you try |
| 3 | | this method okay? Don't cut like that. It's already a- wah |
| 4 | | this pumpkin very easy to cut ley. Don't think so big () It's |
| 5 | | okay. Very important↑ you see ar? This shape you learn |
| 6 | | you can easy to cut the fruits also okay? First time- Okay, I |
| 7 | | teach you first. This is for the stand 'kay? Press! [Cut |
| 8 | Max | [Saw! |
| 9 | Shankar | 'kay? Cut or saw la huh? Press then relax okay? You |
| 10 | | see cut time go deep right? |
| 11 | Max | Ar. |
| 12 | Shankar | Take out, okay? You can hold, hold. You cannot hold↑ |
| 13 | | one more cutting here. Like this. The stand () okay? (2s.) |
| 14 | | Okay? Ar↓() eh () very easy one then below let them sit down |

15 okay? Turn you have to see ↑ () this line.
16 Max Mmm.
17 Shankar Okay? Press! () [Saw.
18 Max [Saw. Curve.
19 Shankar With the curved side. No curve never mind no problem () but
20 the shape no nice. ((Continues to cut the pumpkin he was
21 cutting and then Max tries.)) No, no, no, go near, go near, go
22 near, go near press () press the pumpkin () then saw.
23 YN Slowly
24 Shankar Slowly slowly. Ar, ar, ar, ar, ar () ar. Ya: coming already wat.
25 Ar () Easy () Ar. Okay () Ya (9s.) Mmm. (3s.) Can give you () fifty
26 marks the first time you learn like that. Never mind little bit
27 deep never mind little bit deep also never mind. The
28 pumpkin cannot see the green colour, okay? The green
29 colour mean it's not so good. Never mind you try, try, try,
30 because the knife also not so sharp (5s.) Ar never mind. Like
31 this okay already. Never mind. Don't think it's so thick, it's
32 okay.

Shankar's approach to instruction was subtle and sensitive, and oriented to Max's social and professional face. Shankar initiated the exchange by making a verbal offer to teach Max ('maybe come I teach you', line 1). This offer was designed as a suggestion ('maybe' line 1 and 'maybe' line 2), made minimal imposition ('you try this method' lines 2-3) and offered Max a choice ('Maybe you try this method okay?', line 3). Shankar framed Max's difficulty with the task as the result of a wrongfully chosen method rather than Max's lack of competence by suggesting that a different method might bring about a different result ('that is chef teach you right? Different people have different method maybe you try this method', lines 2-3). He encouraged Max's confidence in managing the task by minimising the difficulty of the task (exaggeratedly, 'wah', line 3) and discouraged thoughts of difficulty due to the size of the pumpkin ('wah this pumpkin very easy to cut ley. Don't think so big', lines 3-4).

As he demonstrated the procedure, Shankar projected a mentoring and nurturing demeanour, and his actions suggested concern for Max's comprehension and learning. He made frequent checks that Max was following the demonstration through a proliferation of

'okay?'s (e.g. 'this is for the stand 'kay?', line 7; 'press then relax okay?', line 9; 'take out okay?', line 12; 'let them sit down okay?', lines 14-15). He encouragingly accepted Max's 'saw' ('cut or saw la huh?', line 9) even though it differed from his own (Shankar's 'cut' in line 7 and Max's 'saw' in line 8) and moreover adopted it when he next described the same action ('saw', line 17). He explicitly sought Max's response and involvement in the exchange ('You see cut time go deep right?', lines 9-10). He emphasised what to look out for to enable Max to do the task properly ('Turn you have to see this line', lines 15-16). And even though not making the 'curve' round the side of the pumpkin was clearly an issue, Shankar did not state this directly; encouragingly, he told Max it was all right if there was no curve ('no curve never mind no problem', line 19), only appending the consequence after it ('but the shape no nice', lines 19-20).

When the demonstration was concluded, Shankar remained behind to watch and advise Max as the latter made another attempt at cutting a pumpkin (line 21 onwards). He reassured Max that he was making progress and encouraged him ('coming already wat', line 24; 'can give you fifty marks the first time you learn like that', lines 25-26; 'never mind', lines 26, 27, 29, 30, 31; 'you try try try', line 29; 'like this okay already', lines 30-31). He also attributed Max's continued difficulty with the task to another cause other than his lack of competence ('because the knife also not so sharp', line 30).

Interactions involving physical demonstrations did not necessarily preclude talk as Steven (Extract 7.9) and other workers' (e.g. Paul in Extract 7.8) demonstrations might suggest. Shankar produced extensive talk and detail in his physical demonstration. Moreover through his verbal actions, he showed sensitivity to Max and projected a non-judgmental and nurturing demeanour, in effect creating a non-threatening learning situation. Furthermore, while other workers provided few if any opportunities for Max's participation, Shankar repeatedly requested it. He continually monitored Max's comprehension and

sought Max's responses. These actions reflected a regard for Max's learning and a willingness to instruct him, and they were seldom seen with other workers in their interactions with Max.

In response to Shankar's actions, Max's interactional behaviour was also altered. He participated actively with Shankar. Although he had not responded verbally at the TRPs in Shankar's opening turn (lines 1-7), it is possible he may have responded non-verbally: 'That is chef teach you right?' (lines 1-2), 'Maybe you try this method okay?' (lines 2-3), 'you can easy to cut the fruits also okay?' (lines 5-6) and 'This is for the stand okay?' (line 7) may be responded to with a nod of the head for example. This may also be the case with the other TRPs (e.g. 'Press then relax okay?', line 9; 'Take out okay?' lines 12-16; 'The stand okay?', line 13; 'Okay?', line 14; 'let them sit down okay?', lines 14-15).

However, Max verbally responded at points that Shankar appeared to emphasise. In lines 9-10, Shankar showed Max the action of cutting off the top of the pumpkin. He highlighted the making of a deep cut and checked Max's attentiveness to this ('You see cut time go deep right?', lines 9-10). Max provided confirmation ('Ar', line 11). In line 15b ('Turn you have to see this line'), although a verbal response was not explicitly requested, it appeared warranted as Shankar emphasised 'this line' and Max provided acknowledgement ('Mmm', line 16).

We see that Max withheld verbal responses in the series of 'okay' checks earlier but that he produced explicitly verbal responses in lines 11 and 16 when non-verbal responses could just as well have been given. But arguably some explicitly verbal response would ratify the emphasis Shankar was placing on these parts of his instruction and Max provided them. In doing so, Max oriented to what Shankar had projected as important, thus aligning himself with Shankar relationally and explicitly displaying this to him.

Max also self-selected and independently produced utterances in response to Shankar's physical actions, overlapping with the latter in the process (lines 8 and 18). In line 8, Max overlapped with Shankar's 'cut' (line 7) to produce his utterance on the next action after Shankar's 'press' (line 7). He overlapped Shankar on the same action again in line 18. These actions displayed Max's attentiveness to the ongoing instruction since his anticipation of the next action depended on watching Shankar's actions. Max acted to explicitly show this attentiveness to Shankar.

Shankar's verbal actions allowed Max to be an active participant with him instead of a silent recipient of instruction as the latter was with Steven in Extract 7.9, and indeed with other workers. On his part, Max responded positively to Shankar and participated actively, producing explicitly verbal responses at various points and aligning himself relationally with Shankar as well as indicating his attentiveness. Their verbal actions contributed to exchanges and extensive talk in the interaction.

For many workers, interactions with Max served a transactional purpose and were aimed at task accomplishment: workers provided instruction to Max so that he could produce the outcomes they expected. With a small minority, instruction provision extended beyond task accomplishment and oriented towards him as an individual with learning needs. Taking the term 'instructional' in a broad sense and encompassing the roles of instructor and learner, the relationship between this small minority of workers and Max may be described as 'instructional' rather than transactional.

7.3 Learning opportunities in talk

Shankar was one among the few workers who had an instructional relationship with Max. An experienced worker, Shankar possessed information that was relevant and necessary to Max and he was patient and keen in sharing it. From the first day they met, Shankar had

been enthusiastic in guiding Max on his tasks in the garde manger. And it was to Shankar instead of the sous chef, Steven, whom Max turned to for instructions. Their interactions involved extensive talk with mutual contributions from worker and trainee. Talk was frequent and covered a range of kitchen knowledge relevant to Max for working in the garde manger where Shankar worked. With Shankar, Max had many learning opportunities in talk.

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, learning opportunities were available through trainees' engagement in the actions of doing and watching. But with Shankar, learning opportunities also presented themselves in talk. Extract 7.11 provides an example of talk that was not directly related to the work at hand and which arose spontaneously as Max worked at a station beside Shankar:

Extract 7.11 'When cutting, you wear' (REC, Garde manger, 01:18:13/121101.002)

- 1 Shankar Some people say, you want to wear the glove right? The raw
- 2 food glove right? That mean ar if the raw fruits () before you
- 3 prepare, before you prepare, with the skin, you no wear
- 4 glove, never mind.
- 5 Max When cutting, you wear.
- 6 Shankar Cutting () and you really prepare to out↑ like you want- You
- 7 working that side right ((pointing to the Joai Asian kitchen))?
- 8 Max Ar.
- 9 Shankar You cutting the squid and the fish ar, for the noodles ar, they
- 10 cutting time never use the glove one. After they cut they
- 11 wash again they put it inside take out for using↑ you know
- 12 that time?
- 13 Max Orh.
- 14 Shankar Ar.

This extract shows further evidence of the different character of interactions between Shankar and Max. Kitchen workers seldom interacted with Max and typically left him alone as he worked on his tasks unless they needed to instruct him on tasks to be carried out. But Shankar initiated this exchange as Max peeled apples and Shankar worked beside him cutting fruits.

Moreover interactions with kitchen workers were typically prompted by an ongoing work activity and directed at it. For example, workers might require Max to carry out a task and their interaction with him focused wholly on enabling the task to be carried out or Max's incorrect actions on a task might prompt a worker to provide remedial instruction. The exchange in this extract was however unrelated to the activity Max was then engaged in.

The topic addressed in this exchange was raised earlier in the shift. About an hour or so before this exchange occurred, Max had been peeling prawns and Seb had come over to show him a quicker way of doing so. Seb was then roundly rebuked by Shankar for not putting on gloves before handling the prawns. In this exchange, Shankar addressed the topic of using gloves and provided Max with information on when to use them. It is worth noting that in providing this information, Shankar again displayed an orientation to jointly construct his information-giving with Max, a feature of their interaction that we saw in Extract 7.10, rather than position Max as a silent recipient of his information.

Shankar began by informing Max that when handling raw fruits that had not been peeled, it was all right not to have gloves on (lines 1-4). Max responded by suggesting that gloves were needed only when cutting the fruits ('When cutting you wear', line 5). Shankar ratified this response by repeating Max's proposition ('Cutting and ...', line 6) although it soon became clear that Max's proposition was not the point he was making.

In lines 6-7, he began to make a reference to the actions of the cooks at the Joai Asian kitchen which was just across the garde manger and visible through the glass panelling in the garde manger. In lines 9-12, he explained that the cooks did not use gloves when cutting raw food ('they cutting time never use the glove one', lines 9-10). They would rinse it after that before putting it in the working chiller ('After they cut they wash again they put it inside', lines 10-11). It was only when they took it out to be cooked and served that they had gloves on ('take out for using you know that time?', lines 11-12). This was the point he

started to make in line 6 ('and you really prepare to out') following his ratification of Max's response and before illustrating with the example from Joai Asian.

In other words, it was not during 'cutting' that gloves were needed as Max suggested in line 5; gloves were needed when food was being prepared to be served (lines 11-12). But Shankar did not explicitly reject Max's suggestion in line 5; in effect, he was orienting to 'a learning relationship that promotes trust and keeps both parties at the table' (Blaka and Filstad 2007:69) and inviting Max's participation (ibid.). Shankar acted as if he had agreed with Max's response, even though it was incorrect, at the beginning of his turn in line 6. He only revealed it was not what he had in mind as the exchange unfolded.

Shankar's subtle encouraging of Max's participation is further suggested by his reference to the Joai Asian kitchen which he did not format in declarative syntax but as an interrogative ('you working that side right?' lines 6-7), thus making relevant a response from Max and thereby inviting him to participate in the example he was developing. Moreover by referencing Max's previous experience at Joai Asian, he encouraged and brought Max into the exchange.

In response, Max indicated that the content he received was informative and that he had undergone a change of state in his then-current knowledge with 'Orh' which may be roughly glossed as 'Oh I see'. Shankar closed the exchange with a confirming 'Ar' that indicated he was satisfied that Max had indeed understood the information he was providing.

Although the content of Shankar's instruction i.e. when gloves were needed was straightforward, he provided this through an interaction that involved exchanges with Max. Furthermore this content had nothing to do with Max's ongoing activity. Shankar was providing him with additional, useful information.

In the kitchens, learning opportunities in talk were rare as talk was minimal in most interactions. But these opportunities were important when they occurred. In talk, instruction was made explicit. The above interaction which explicitly addressed the use of gloves was a case in point. Moreover it was through talk that Max learned about work-related topics beyond his ongoing tasks. Recall that Max's interactions with most workers concerned their instruction to him on tasks to be carried out or those he was in the midst of doing. In those interactions, Max had opportunity to learn about work only as a result of doing a task. But in talk, learning opportunities did not depend on Max's ongoing tasks. In the above exchange, Max's activity had nothing to do with gloves; nonetheless he was able to obtain information about their use.

A further example of the provision of kitchen knowledge through talk is provided in Extract 7.12 in which Shankar explicitly informed Max about the specificity of the work in the garde manger. There were 'house rules' in each kitchen and awareness of these rules was important, relevant and necessary for trainees to establish themselves in the kitchen or even simply to be able to function competently in it. In Extract 7.12, Max was taken to task on his work with the roasted pumpkins and provided with detailed information on accomplishing the task to the standards required. As the interaction unfolded, Shankar made explicit the specific requirements of the garde manger:

Extract 7.12 'Roasting pumpkins' (REC, Garde manger, 121101)

- 1 Shankar The pumpkin[↑] come in right, so you have to
- 2 wash the sk- uh: wash the skin first=
- 3 Max =Okay.
- 4 Shankar After that, you remove the skin, after you cut it
- 5 out- you cut it out also how you cut it out. You
- 6 see, the wrong size. Different outlet is differ- ()
- 7 different but the () for here we using in this size.
- 8 Max Okay.
- 9 (Lines deleted.)
- 10 Shankar What is the temperature, okay? The combi oven
- 11 is a difference, you know? Sometimes other place
- 12 is different, our own here is different. So you have
- 13 to know how the baking is dark colour. Maybe it's

14		something like a golden brown, temperature too
15		high then the
16		(Lines deleted.)
17	Shankar	For here ar, is, the pumpkin come, is the <u>way</u> to
18		do it. The pumpkin is come already, this is the
19		<u>way</u> to do it <u>one</u> .
20	Max	Orh↓ okay.

Shankar began with a focus on the task at hand ('The pumpkin come in right', line 1). He detailed the steps involved ('wash the skin', line 2; 'remove the skin' and 'cut it out', lines 4-5) and assessed Max's work ('you cut it out also how you cut it out. You see, the wrong size', lines 5-6). His actions provided instruction on the required procedure and in assessing Max's current performance on the task, also pointed out the adjustments Max needed to make in carrying out the task. In response to these instructions, Max indicated acknowledgement ('Okay', lines 3 and 8).

Shankar's next action conveyed knowledge relevant for accomplishing this task in this kitchen, thus making explicit knowledge that workers in this kitchen had. He highlighted the specific requirements in the garde manger ('Different outlet is differ- () different but the () for here we using in this size', lines 6-7). These specific requirements and attention to them were important enough for Shankar to raise the issue several times in the exchange. It was brought up again in lines 10-12 ('The combi oven ... our own here is different') and reiterated a third time in lines 17-19 ('For here ar ... this is the way to do it one'). Particularly in lines 17-19, Shankar repeatedly emphasised the specific 'way' of preparing pumpkin wedges. His repeated stress on the 'way' to do the task conveyed the expectation that this way be taken seriously. In highlighting the specific nature of individual kitchens and more particularly, the specific practices in the garde manger, Shankar emphasised the 'house rules' and standards Max should be aware of for working competently in that kitchen. Max responded to the instruction with the acknowledgement token 'okay',

prefacing this with the falling-intoned Singlish discourse particle 'Orh↓' in turn-initial position, indicating compliance and acknowledgement (line 20).

Although learning opportunities were rare in talk since talk was usually minimal, they were important since they provided information that exceeded what Max would have accessed through doing tasks, doing Nellie's work, watching or origination. Extracts 7.11 and 7.12 show Shankar providing Max with additional and useful information necessary for working in the kitchen. Being a good trainee involved sourcing learning opportunities whenever they presented themselves (Eraut et al. 2004). Max responded amenably to Shankar's instruction- and information-giving and participated actively in receiving both from Shankar in their interactions.

But the extended interactions and the learning opportunities available through them were dependent on the relationships established in the kitchens. As mentioned earlier, Shankar had seemed eager and willing to pass on his knowledge of kitchen work and practices from the very first day that he guided Max on kitchen tasks. This inclination on Shankar's part was clearly evident in his interactions with Max. As we have seen, Shankar oriented to Max as a patient, sensitive, nurturing and encouraging instructor. In addition, Shankar also regularly initiated interactions to provide Max with additional information. Indeed the construction of an instructional relationship between Shankar and Max can be seen in the analysis of one of their first interactions in which instructor-learner positionings were arguably established and which 'set the tone' for their subsequent interactions. To be even-handed between the two particular individuals with whom Max had explicitly instructional relationships, the following section analyses the construction of that relationship between Max and the other worker, Eric.

7.4 Building an instructional relationship

Described by Max as ‘pro-active in talking’, Eric interacted with Max extensively and their talk covered topics ranging from cooking to general food knowledge and even to career and marriage advice. In this section, I explore the construction of their instructional relationship through talk.

Eric’s interactions with Max present an interesting argument against the notion that minimal talk between workers and trainees was due to workers being busy and preoccupied with work so that talk was largely dispensed with or necessarily minimal. Eric was a sous chef at Maurie’s and he headed the kitchen. He worked the grill station which was the station of the most senior chef in a kitchen, held the most responsibilities and was heavily involved in cooking for à la carte service. Despite his heavy involvement in work, Eric provided instruction even during busy service hours and allowed – in fact encouraged – and guided Max in cooking at his station for the entire service.

Eric oriented to, perhaps even embraced, the role of being an instructor and taking up this role in relation to Max. Most trainees did not cook throughout service hours in most of the kitchens: they cooked a few orders usually when the kitchen was not busy and workers instructed them on the preparation of those orders. But Eric allowed Max to cook on most service shifts and often throughout the service.

Moreover interactions with other workers on cooking were relatively brief and specific to the preparation of particular orders. They started and ended with the preparation of orders. Instruction provision tended to consist of recipe-type steps i.e. which ingredients to add, their amounts and the sequence of adding them. In cooking-related interactions with Eric, the latter not only provided instructions for cooking but also other relevant information for working such as one’s physical positioning, advice on organising one’s work activities and work station, handling the pressures of service and tricks of the trade. This resulted in

extended interactions involving sequences that ranged from the ongoing activity to topics beyond it.

Extract 7.13 provides an example of an extended interaction between the pair. At the start of the interaction, Max had been stirring a pot of soup as instructed by another chef, Paul. As dinner service began, Eric called Max over to the grill station and instructed him on cooking for service:

Extract 7.13 'Porterhouse steak' (REC, Maurie's, 121123)

- | | | | |
|----|------|---|------------|
| 1 | Eric | Come you come and do orders first. | Sequence 1 |
| 2 | Max | Chef told me to (inaudible) | |
| 3 | Eric | Later you come and do orders first. Let Kyle do that. | |
| 4 | Max | ((Goes to the cooking station and sees the meats | |
| 5 | | on the countertop)) Do the seasoning, do that kind | |
| 6 | | of thing ar? | |
| 7 | Eric | Ar. Because I want you to do orders. Whole day cut | |
| 8 | | things hor, anyone is able to do it ar. | |
| 9 | Max | ((Prepares to season the meats.)) Have to () have | |
| 10 | | to add the seasoning ar? | |
| 11 | Eric | Ar. The same seasoning. Okay mixed grill hor | Sequence 2 |
| 12 | Max | Mixed what? Mixed grill ar? | |
| 13 | Eric | Ar. Mixed grill. Then porterhouse is ((shows Max the | |
| 14 | | porterhouse steak)) | |
| 15 | | (1m 35s.) ((Servers and cooks talking in the | |
| 16 | | background. Jeremy comes over and orders a steak.)) | |
| 17 | Eric | Your position hor (3s.) Your position don't cross Paul | Sequence 3 |
| 18 | | ar. | |
| 19 | Max | Okay. | |
| 20 | | (4s.) | |
| 21 | Eric | Hor? You can cross me. Don't cross Paul but if | |
| 22 | | there's nothing hor, you try to stand by righthand | |
| 23 | | side (3s.) Do you know why? | |
| 24 | Max | Help you to grill ar? | |
| 25 | Eric | ((loudly)) <u>You</u> grill ar! Not I grill ar! | |
| 26 | Max | Orh↓ | |
| 27 | Eric | I grill, I can grill any time ar. You have to <u>learn ar</u> . I | |
| 28 | | need to, I need to stay by your side and <u>teach you ar</u> . | |
| 29 | | I grill, I've been grilling, I've been grilling for so | |
| 30 | | many years. Even if I didn't have that many years, I'd | |
| 31 | | still know how to grill ar. I tell you, if you don't use | |
| 32 | | your hands, you will not know. I tell you, don't be | |
| 33 | | afraid just go ahead and do it. (22s.) Uh, that | Sequence 4 |
| 34 | | porterhouse (inaudible) don't grill for too long. | |
| 35 | Max | Don't cook it for too long ar? | |
| 36 | Eric | Ar. Don't sear it for too long. Lightly sear is good | |
| 37 | | enough. Then put it aside. When it's time to serve | |

38		then grill.	
39		(1m 12s.) ((Intermittent talking between Eric, Paul and	
40		Mei about orders.))	
41	Max	So mixed grill comprises a tenderloin, a lamb ar?	Sequence 5
42	Eric	Two lamb chops	
43	Max	Two lamb chops ar?	
44	Eric	It's one for two- two person ar understand? ((Passes	
45		Max a piece of steak.)) This also sear. (11s.)	Sequence 6
46		because this will be grilled later so lightly sear now.	
47		((Max places the piece of steak on the pan.))	
48		(1m 31s.)	
49	Max	Take and grill ar?	Sequence 7
50	Eric	Ar (18s.) Usually hor, grill hor, I will be on the safe side.	Sequence 8
51		You know, I grill hor	
52	Max	On one side and not the other side.	
53	Eric	Ar. You know why? Because if you have contact with	
54		the heat hor, cook longer hor, it will burn mah. You	
55		want to prevent burn hor, you have to flip it over to	
56		let it cool down first mah.	
57	Max	Give it a line first ar?	
58	Eric	Ar. Give it a line=	
59	Max	=then do do the	
60	Eric	Ar.	
61	Max	Orh.	
62	Eric	Understand? To prevent to get burnt ar in case-we	
63		have to practise mah so that it'll be smooth. If really	
64		busy hor, flipping it over and over hor, your contact-	
65		(if) only burn one part hor, that means directly	
66		contact fire for too long, it'll get burnt mah. Because	
67		some more we are using spices mah.	
68	Max	Orh.	
69	Eric	Understand? So I don't want to sear it like this.	
70		Meaning to say I prefer to fry	
71	Max	One side one side then fry it all through.	
72	Eric	Ar. Correct. So you have to flip it over and over so	
73		that it will not direct for too long mah. (11s.) Because	
74		as a griller you have to believe what you are doing.	
75		Meaning to say <u>whatever</u> thing over already hor you	
76		will not be able to save. So you- whatever thing you	
77		less ar still can, still can survive.	

Looking at the sequences

This interaction involved extensive talk over eight sequences, even barring Sequence 1 which was admittedly not instruction-related although it set up the instructional situation.

In the seven other sequences, Eric's instruction ranged from cooking orders and the

ingredients (Sequences 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7) to physical positioning (Sequence 3) and the process of grilling (Sequence 8). Eric acted to expand sequences with known-answer questions ('Do you know why?', line 23; 'You know why?', line 53) and produced extensive talk in fairly long turns (lines 27-33a, 62-67, 72-77). Max's verbal actions were enacted both in second position in response to Eric as well as in first position as he actively participated in the interaction.

Turning to the sequences themselves, we see that only one (Sequence 6) in the eight instructional sequences involved verbal instructions from the worker and a physical response from the trainee in carrying out the instructions. Recall that in most interactions with workers, this was the relevant adjacency action pairing i.e. verbal action (worker) - physical action (trainee). In Sequence 6, Eric passed Max a piece of steak and issued a directive ('This also sear', line 45) followed by further instructions after a pause to lightly sear the steak as it will be grilled later (line 46). In response, Max did as instructed.

(There is a pause of about 11s between the directive 'This also sear' and the further instruction 'because this will be grilled later so lightly sear now'. Pauses and gaps were not unusual in the instructional context during service and they characterised interactions taking place during such periods. We note from the extract that talk was intermittent and gaps occurred throughout the interaction, ranging from three seconds (Sequence 3) to more than a minute (between the end of Sequence 6 and the start of Sequence 7). Whilst providing instruction to Max, Eric as a worker was nonetheless still working at his station during a busy service. He was thus also involved in talk around him as he conferred with other workers. In other words, although Eric was providing instruction, he was not exclusively attending to Max and the latter had to fit in with the situation. Pauses and gaps were inevitable in these cooking-related interactions.)

The other seven sequences involved more than physical responses on Max's part. He produced a range of verbal actions – verbally acknowledging instructions and making information and clarification requests throughout the interaction. In initiating the instructional interaction, Eric had positioned Max as a learner and as the interaction unfolded, we see instances of Max orienting to their mutual instructor-learner positioning.

Setting up instructor-learner positions

To be sure, the instructional situation did not appear to be apparent to Max at the start of the interaction. In Sequence 3 near the beginning of this interaction, Max showed uncertainty about his role at the grill station and the overall instructional situation. This uncertainty was subsequently addressed by Eric.

In lines 17-18, Eric instructed Max about his physical positioning at the grill station, telling him not to move into Paul's station ('Your position don't cross Paul ar'). Max acknowledged the instruction ('Okay', line 19). After a short pause, Eric provided further instruction by repeating his earlier instruction, further defining the limits of Max's movement and specifying exactly where Max should be positioned ('You can cross me. Don't cross Paul but if there's nothing hor, you try to stand by righthand side', lines 21-23).

Eric's instruction referred to the boundaries that separated workers' stations. Workers worked at fixed stations in the kitchens and did not move into one another's station. This was a function of the division of labour with each worker producing their specific output, as well as a means of preventing obstruction to workers' movements and a safeguard against collisions in a relatively tight space where workers handled items such as knives and hot food. Max was thus instructed not to move into Paul's station and by implication informed that he should stay within the boundaries of his station. As Eric was aware of Max's presence, movement around Eric was less hazardous; moreover as both of them were

working at the same station, it was necessary to move past the other at times hence Eric's instruction that Max could 'cross' him but not Paul.

After another short pause, Eric produced a 'known-answer' question ('Do you know why?', line 23). In doing so, Eric positioned himself as the instructor and Max the learner. Eric possessed the information he was requesting and his action checked whether Max also possessed this information before providing or withholding it. But Max's response turned out to be a 'wrong' answer. He guessed that the reason was so that he could help Eric grill the meats ('Help you to grill ar?', line 24).

Eric responded to this guess by forcefully rejecting the construction of co-worker providing assistance and explicitly configured the situation as an instructional situation. He loudly and emphatically informed Max that Max would be the one doing the cooking, not himself ('You grill ar not I grill ar!', line 25). Max acknowledged this information ('Orh↓', line 26).

Despite this, Eric went on to hammer home the point and set the record straight in a fairly extensive turn (lines 27-33). He made it clear that the situation was set up for Max's benefit not his ('I grill I can grill any time ar', line 27) and that it was created for Max to learn ('you have to learn ar', line 27), thus positioning Max explicitly as learner. He stated that his role was to instruct, explicitly positioning himself as instructor ('I need to I need to stay by your side and teach you ar', lines 27-28). He re-emphasised the instructional situation set up for Max's benefit by stating his ample experience and expertise ('I grill, I've been grilling, I've been grilling for so many years. Even if I didn't have that many years I'd still know how to grill ar', lines 29-31), and implied that he did not require more opportunities to grill whereas Max did. Finally, he positioned himself as someone with knowledge about how one should learn the trade, strongly advising Max that he should have practical experience ('I tell you, if you don't use your hands, you will not know', lines 31-32) and that he should be unfazed by the prospect of learning in this manner ('I tell you, don't be afraid, just go

ahead and do it', lines 32-33). As it turned out, information for the known-answer question was never revealed as Eric responded to Max's guess. In this response, he explicitly instantiated the situation as instructional and positioned them mutually as instructor and learner.

Assuming the learner positioning

On his part, Max positioned himself as requiring instruction from Eric in the subsequent sequences. He assumed a less-knowledgeable position and elicited information from Eric through making clarification and information requests.

Following a gap after he concluded his turn in line 33, Eric initiated an instructional sequence in Sequence 4. He instructed Max not to grill the porterhouse steak for too long ('that porterhouse don't grill for too long', lines 33-34). In response, Max produced a clarification request embedded with a display of understanding; he reformulated the instruction with a translation of it into Mandarin (line 35). Eric ratified the response ('Ar', line 36) and responded in Mandarin ('Don't sear it for too long'). He also provided further instructions ('Lightly sear is good enough. Then put it aside. When it's time to serve then grill', lines 36-38).

The interaction is then suspended as Eric conferred with other workers over orders. It was after all a busy dinner service. After a fairly long pause of a minute and twelve seconds, Max initiated a sequence with an information request. In Sequence 5, he revived an earlier informing sequence initiated by Eric on the mixed grill order which had stopped short of information about its composition as Eric showed Max the porterhouse steak (lines 11-14). In line 41, Max requested information from Eric about the composition of the mixed grill order ('So mixed grill comprises a tenderloin, a lamb ar?'). Eric corrected the second part of the proposition ('Two lamb chops', line 42). In the context this is understood as a

tenderloin steak and two lamb chops (and sausages) instead of one lamb chop as presumed by Max in line 41. Max then initiated a clarification request ('Two lamb chops ar?', line 43) to which Eric oriented to the implication of a fairly large serving by explaining that the order was designed to be shared (lines 44-45).

Following a pause after Eric's instruction to sear a piece of steak, Max initiated another sequence in Sequence 7. Evidently he had judged that the steak was ready for the next action on it and requested confirmation from Eric on the next action ('Take and grill ar?', line 49). Eric provided the confirmation ('Ar', line 50).

Max's requests for clarification, information and confirmation in Sequences 4, 5 and 7 respectively, positioned him as less knowledgeable and requiring instruction from his projectedly more knowledgeable counterpart, Eric.

Significantly too, Max initiated two of these sequences (Sequences 5 and 7). As mentioned in Section 7.1.1, workers were typically the ones who initiated sequences. Moreover, Max's initiations were made whilst Eric himself was working, constituting thus rather bold incursions into the latter's activity. However as we saw, this interaction had been initiated by Eric. Eric initiated the instructional situation by re-directing Max from his earlier task to the grill station for his instruction and he also initiated the verbal interaction that ensued. With the former action, Eric positioned Max as a learner and with the latter he legitimised Max's verbal interaction with him. Furthermore he had already made their mutual instructor-learner positioning and the instructional situation explicit in an earlier sequence, Sequence 3.

Max's sequence initiations occurred on the back of these actions. Positioned as a learner by the actions of Eric, Max was legitimately positioned to initiate sequences eliciting information from Eric the instructor. In fact his sequence initiations would seem warranted

given Eric's actions and necessary in order to orient to their instructor-learner positioning. Both the sequence initiations and requests for clarification, information and confirmation reflected an orientation to Eric as knowledgeable and as his instructor.

Continuing the ongoing instructor-learner positioning

In the final part of this interaction, we see a further example of the ongoing instructor-learner positioning that was established as the interaction progressed. Sequence 8 was prompted by the activity Max was then engaged in, which was frying the porterhouse steak on the grill. Recall that in Sequence 7, Max requested confirmation on grilling the porterhouse steak and Eric provided the confirmation. Following a pause at the end of Sequence 7, Eric initiated an instruction-giving sequence on grilling; specifically he addressed the need to continually flip the steaks as they cooked on the grill to prevent them from getting burnt.

In lines 50-51, Eric stated that he took a cautious approach to grilling and projected his actions when doing so ('Usually hor, grill hor, I will be on the safe side. You know, I grill hor'). Max self-selected and offered a syntactic completion ('On one side and not the other side', line 52) which was arguably an attempt to display his knowledge. Eric ratified the completion but in producing a known-answer question ('Ar you know why?', line 53), he appeared to treat Max's display as something more akin to a guess rather than a display of knowledge.

Eric proceeded with an explanation (lines 53-56). The point that Eric was making was about continually flipping: grilling on one side and then the other side and back again repeatedly (lines 72-73) rather than as Max suggested, 'on one side and not the other side'. But in response to Max's turn in line 52, Eric provided a partial explanation that tied in with Max's completion ('You want to prevent burn hor, you have to flip it over to let it cool down first

mah', lines 54-56). In ratifying Max's completion (turn-initial 'Ar', line 53) and extending it with this partial explanation, Eric affirmed Max's response in line 52 even though it was not exactly the point that Eric was trying to make.

Max produced an information request on the duration for cooking one side of the steak ('Give it a line first ar?', line 57). Eric ratified it and upgraded it through a verbatim repetition of Max's proposition ('Ar. Give it a line', line 58), producing yet another indication of affirmation.

Max initiated a second information request which seemed incomplete (line 59) but was seemingly understood by Eric who ratified it ('Ar', line 60). In response, Max explicitly displayed receipt of new information through a change-of-state token ('Orh', line 61).

In his next turn Eric checked Max's understanding even though it had already been given ('Understand?', line 62). Although Eric initially described the action of flipping as a personal habit (lines 50-51), he now persuaded Max to adopt it. He urged Max to practise flipping to be accustomed to doing it ('we have to practise mah so that it'll be smooth', lines 62-63), justifying the action with a repeat of the earlier-stated reason ('only burn one part hor, that means directly contact fire for too long, it'll get burnt mah', lines 65-66) and adding another ('Because some more we are using spices mah', lines 66-67). In response, Max displayed receipt of new information by explicitly acknowledging this information with another change-of-state token ('Orh', line 68).

Eric produced another check on Max's understanding ('Understand?', line 69) and acted to close the sequence with his proposition that was suspended in his earlier turn in lines 50-51 ('So I don't want to sear it like this. Meaning to say I prefer to fry', lines 69-70). Max offered a syntactic completion that now displayed complete understanding ('One side one side then fry it all through', line 71). This received strong affirmation from Eric who

acknowledged it ('Ar', line 72) and emphasised it with positive assessment ('Correct', line 72). Notably Eric claimed the right to the last word on the matter and reproduced the point as a piece of instruction ('So you have to flip it over and over so that it will not direct for too long mah', lines 72-73).

In this sequence, we see Eric's explicit positioning as instructor as he provided instruction on grilling. Max on the other hand positioned himself as less knowledgeable and indicated receipt of new information at various points in the sequence. Max also made an attempt to display his knowledge but Eric appeared to orient to it as a guess rather than a display of knowledge. Nonetheless he encouragingly affirmed Max's responses. Notably, Eric's instructor positioning is made explicit again at the end of the sequence when he closed the sequence with a final instruction on how Max should grill the steaks.

Positioned as learner by Eric, who initiated the instructional interaction and verbally instantiated them as instructor and learner respectively, Max accepted this positioning and actively participated in constructing their mutual instructor-learner relationship. His sequence initiations and requests for information, clarification and confirmation positioned him as less knowledgeable and requiring instruction from his projectedly more knowledgeable counterpart, Eric. Max also displayed receipt of new information and indicated understanding in second position. His verbal actions in first and second positions constructed and sustained the instructional relationship that was set up by the interaction and ongoingly established within it.

7.5 Encouraging talk

In the preceding section, we saw Max's actions in building the instructional relationship between Eric and himself. Max's verbal actions also encouraged talk and stimulated learning opportunities. Like interactions between Shankar and Max, interactions between

Max and Eric were not limited to instructional exchanges. Eric was generous with his knowledge, providing information ranging from general ‘good to have’ knowledge such as the types and origins of various cheeses and the making of basil oil to career advice and even gossip about fellow workers. Orienting to Eric as the knowledgeable information-giver, Max acted to sustain these interactions and encouraged information from Eric. Extract 7.14 provides an example of an interaction in which Eric provided information on truffles. This information, though not immediately relevant to kitchen work, was useful ‘good to have’ knowledge for an aspiring cook.

At the time of the exchange, the Maurie’s kitchen was waiting to begin a private dinner event that they were providing service to. The three workers Eric, Paul and Mei as well as two trainees Max and Kyle were standing around and chatting while they waited. Apparently prompted by the bowl of truffles on the service counter which Max had sliced earlier, Eric initiated the following information-giving exchange:

Extract 7.14 ‘Truffles’ (REC, Maurie’s, 121117.003)

- 1 Eric Oh earlier you () earlier the truffle you were working on
- 2 (7s.)
- 3 Max There are many types.
- 4 Eric Okay. Truffle, there are many types of truffle so uh: like ()
- 5 you () the type you were working on () usually is
- 6 Max from China.
- 7 Eric China truffle.
- 8 Max The cheap ones lah?
- 9 Eric Cheap. Then () there’s one type also black like this,
- 10 we call it the winter truffle.
- 11 Max Winter ar?
- 12 Eric Winter truffle is- why is it called winter truffle?
- 13 Max White ar?
- 14 Eric Winter truffle is () snow () during snow time uh:
- 15 Max Only grows in the winter.
- 16 Eric No () they are already grown during snow time they
- 17 become uh: () How do I explain ley? () They () keep all of
- 18 their nutritious mah.
- 19 Max Ar.
- 20 Eric Winter, winter, nothing () not not a () creature can () can
- 21 grow mah.
- 22 Max Ar.
- 23 Eric Like () you see like snake all of these actually () uh: they

24 () hide in their holes mah. Then they won't be hunting
 25 or what mah. Like () uh: plants are also the same. So
 26 they keep all their best things together. They are- Winter
 27 after- what comes after winter?
 28 Max Summer.
 29 Eric Ar. Summer. Then it's () uh: after that, they want to ()
 30 become () sprouting mah. They want to () grow lor. So ()
 31 winter time, black truffle, winter truffle is especially
 32 expensive. Then some more especially very good flavour.
 33 (1s.)
 34 Max Very strong ar the flavour?
 35 Eric Ar. The flavour is very strong. () Because- one kilogramme
 36 of it is roughly more than two thousand dollars. (3s.)
 37 Two thousand dollars. So it's very () very () fragrant ar.
 38 So you () usually you see risotto ar, or whatever ar, you
 39 want to put it in the risotto () because-
 40 Max [For the flavour.
 41 Eric [Truffle needs to:: flavour. One is for flavour. Secondly is
 42 for keep it drying.
 43 (1s.)
 44 Max Dry ar?
 45 Eric Ar. Keep it dry.
 46 (3s.)
 47 Max Risotto ar?
 48 Eric Ar. Risotto. But the risotto () keep drying, they don't use
 49 uh:: don't use winter truffle. Winter truffle is () normally
 50 is uh::
 51 (The rest of the interaction is deleted.)

Eric initiated the interaction by making reference to a task Max worked on earlier (line 1).

As he then checked on the beef in the oven, a lapse of seven seconds ensued. In line 3, Max revived the sequence through a syntactic completion of Eric's suspended utterance in line 1.

Eric oriented to the sequence, producing an 'okay' (line 4) that marked the start of his information-giving and proceeded with his informing. He displayed his knowledge of truffle by informing Max that there were many types and as he projected information on the particular type that Max had worked on ('the type you were working on', line 5), Max offered a syntactic completion that displayed his own knowledge (line 6). Eric ratified this and did not continue.

In response, Max initiated a confirmation request on his own knowledge of China truffle ('The cheap ones lah?', line 8). Eric provided the confirmation and introduced information on the winter truffle ('There's one type also black like this, we call it the winter truffle', lines 9-10). Max produced a clarification request which indicated unfamiliarity with the term and thus positioned Eric as someone with new information to offer ('Winter ar?', line 11).

Eric began to provide an explanation but re-formatted his turn to produce his utterance in interrogative form and elicited suggestions from Max ('Winter truffle is why is it called winter truffle?', line 12), thus showing an arguably pedagogical orientation. Max provided a guess ('White ar?', line 13). Eric did not acknowledge this and proceeded with his informing (line 14). Midway through Eric's turn, Max made a second guess for the naming of the winter truffle ('Only grows in the winter', line 15). Eric explicitly rejected the guess with a turn-initial 'No' and continued with information on the winter truffle (lines 16-18).

In line 17, Eric appeared to encounter difficulty with his explanation ('How do I explain ley?') and as he attempted to explain (lines 17-18, 20-21), Max produced acknowledgement tokens to display understanding of Eric's ongoing explanation ('Ar', lines 19, 22). This action seemed to be reassuring and encouraging Eric in his effort to provide the explanation.

As Eric approached the end of his turn in line 27, he elicited Max's suggestions again ('What comes after winter?', line 27). Max responded as requested and Eric continued with his informing until he closed the sequence in line 32.

A second later though, Max produced an information request eliciting Eric's response ('Very strong ar the flavour?' line 34). Eric responded and continued to provide information (lines 35-39). Max made a display of knowledge by syntactically completing Eric's utterance with a reason for keeping truffle in risotto ('For the flavour', line 40). Eric affirmed this,

provided a second reason and concluded his turn ('One is for flavour. Secondly is for keep it drying', lines 41-42). The interaction stalled.

A second later, Max initiated repair and revived the information-giving ('Dry ar?', line 44). Eric provided a minimal repair with an assenting 'ar' and a repeat of his earlier information ('Ar. Keep it dry', line 45) but he did not continue. This resulted in a gap and another potential sequence closure.

Three seconds later, Max initiated another repair and elicited more information from Eric ('Risotto ar?', line 47). Eric provided assent, repeated the object in question ('Ar. Risotto', line 48) and extended his information-giving, stating that winter truffle was not used for keeping risotto dry (lines 48-49).

We see in this interaction that although the information on truffles was produced by Eric, its continued production was encouraged by Max. Orienting to Eric as the knowledgeable information-giver, Max actively stimulated information-sharing and encouraged learning opportunities in talk. He requested confirmation on his existing knowledge and clarification on new knowledge, explicitly positioning himself as less knowledgeable in relation to Eric and seeking his information. He also produced acknowledgement tokens as Eric 'struggled' to provide his explanation at one point, thus displaying understanding and urging him on. At various points throughout the interaction when the sequence and interaction appeared to close, Max made information requests and repair initiations which elicited Eric's information and revived the sequence; each time Eric responded with more information. In effect Max's verbal actions kept the information coming and the interaction going, and encouraged Eric to share his knowledge.

It might be suggested that Eric would produce the information regardless of Max's actions but there were at least points at which he did not continue and at which Max's actions kept

the sequence going. For example while he produced a minimal response (line 45) in response to Max's repair initiation (line 44), he produced substantial content (lines 48-50) in response to Max's immediately following second attempt (line 47). Max's verbal actions arguably encouraged or discouraged Eric's continued production of information.

7.6 Talk in the everyday world

Talk in this context was minimal. Verbal interactions typically involved a single verbal turn and rarely any exchanges. They were also brief and sporadic throughout a shift. They elicited trainees' physical actions and the latter responded accordingly. Often instruction was provided through physical demonstrations which involved little verbal instruction. These interactions were transactional in character with workers providing instruction to trainees for the purpose of task accomplishment. In this context, opportunities to gain knowledge about kitchen work through talk were relatively rare compared to those that occurred through doing and watching.

Nonetheless these opportunities were not absent and they depended on the relationships constructed and trainee actions in talk. With a handful of workers, Max had an instructional relationship and his interactions with them involved extensive talk and learning opportunities. Out of around 50 individuals who worked in the kitchens when I was there and with the majority assigning tasks to trainees and providing instruction at some point, two workers Shankar and Eric had instructional relationships with Max. These interactions went beyond procedural instruction and the immediate contexts of ongoing tasks and the kitchens. They provided many learning opportunities and made instruction explicit. The knowledge shared included that which was not accessible through merely doing and watching; specific kitchen knowledge for working competently; and 'good to have' knowledge for an aspiring cook.

However, these relationships and the learning opportunities they offered had to be worked at. Both workers and Max collaboratively built this relationship in talk. They mutually oriented to instructor-learner positions and provided, responded to as well as sought instruction and information in their respective positions.

It is worth noting that as much as it may have been the workers' inclination to provide guidance, Max's verbal actions were no less important in constructing and sustaining the relationships and interactions. His actions showed an orientation to individuals as instructors, displayed interest and willingness to receive their information, encouraged sequence/interaction continuity and stimulated the sharing of knowledge. In other words, while workers may have been willing mentors, Max himself also contributed to building the relationships and generating learning opportunities in talk.

This chapter explored talk as a form of action and together with the preceding chapters describing the actions of doing, watching and origination, it completes the analysis of trainee experience on work placement told through the actions trainees engaged in in their day-to-day world. The following chapter will discuss lessons that can be drawn from this study as well as address some of its limitations.

Chapter 8 Discussion

The primary objective of this thesis has been to illuminate the experience of trainee cooks on work placement. In the preceding chapters, I described aspects of this experience that constituted their day-to-day world, specifically their engagement in the actions of doing, watching, origination and talk. In this chapter, I discuss the outcomes and implications of the study and address some of its limitations.

The first three sections relate to the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions made by this research. I start by highlighting aspects of the trainee experience that support and extend findings in existing research on workplace learning (Section 8.1). Following this, I describe the theoretical and ‘substantive constructs’ (LeCompte and Preissle 1993:142) of origination and legitimate presence uncovered in the context and discuss the implications of these concepts (Section 8.2). Finally, the possibility demonstrated by the study of using a linguistic-ethnographic approach in a minimal talk context is discussed and the potential of using this methodology in other similar settings is raised (Section 8.3). In the final section, some limitations of the study are addressed (Section 8.4).

8.1 Being a trainee in the kitchens

The work-driven, production-oriented and embodied nature of work in the professional kitchen inevitably resulted in the dominance of certain actions in the day-to-day world of trainee cooks. Overwhelmingly work necessitated physical activity. Trainees’ daily activities in this context involved the actions of doing and watching (Chapter 5) and for Max in particular, origination (Chapter 6). Talk was often minimal and focused on task accomplishment; nonetheless, extended interactions with a few workers provided important learning opportunities (Chapter 7).

Doing in the kitchens

Trainees engaged in doing tasks requested of them by workers and required by the production environment (ad-hoc errands and routine tasks) as well as in doing Nellie's work i.e. performing in the capacity of particular workers at their stations. The two doing-type situations differed in the nature of instruction. In doing tasks (Section 5.1.1), trainees received information on kitchen tasks and brief instructions. They were also shown kitchen requirements, techniques and procedures through physical demonstration. While they worked, their incorrect actions were pointed out and corrected by workers in the vicinity or passing by their work stations. Following the instruction, they were left on their own to complete the tasks. In doing Nellie's work (Section 5.1.1), trainees received guidance in the form of instantaneous instructions and supervision from workers who remained by their side throughout the work activity.

Whilst at work, trainees' actions were highly visible to all other workers and their activity was constantly 'frontstage' (Section 5.1.2). Their performance to the audience of superiors and other workers was ongoing all the while that they were at work, under repeated scrutiny and open to judgement by one and all. Workers judged their performance and provided instruction on incorrect actions, resulting in a situation in which instruction was often multiply sourced; trainees received instruction not merely from the worker who assigned them the tasks.

Making mistakes was a common feature in *doing* and it presented learning opportunities (Sections 5.1.7 and 6.4). Contrary to what one might expect, mistakes were not frowned on; instead they were treated without much fuss and quickly forgiven. With a few workers, *doing* was prioritised over the risk of making mistakes in order for trainees to learn, suggesting therefore the importance of *doing* as a mode of learning in this context.

Validation of trainees' work was conveyed implicitly through the actions of workers (Section 5.1.8). These actions included workers' consecutive actions following the production of output, for example in plating and serving the orders prepared by the trainees, and in the absence of comment on their actions as well as trusting them to work independently of their instruction and in their absence.

Watching in the kitchens

When they were not engaged in *doing*, trainees *watched* other workers' engagement in it (Section 5.2). Watching was treated as a mode of learning in the kitchens (Section 5.2.1). Workers physically demonstrated kitchen techniques and procedures, often with little verbal instruction; their physical actions were treated as self-explanatory and trainees were expected to learn by watching. But the activity of watching also gave trainees a legitimate presence in the kitchens (Section 5.2.2). It made it acceptable for trainees to be in an almost-constant busy working environment without participating in the action as all other workers should.

Whilst the action of watching might be commonly construed as passive, Max's activity as an observer showed that his engagement in watching was anything but passive. He watched actively and gathered information about work, doing this through making notes of ongoing actions and activities, asking questions about workers' actions and making attempts to replicate observed actions (Section 5.2.3). He was also strategic in watching, moving among workers and positioning himself to watch different activities (Section 5.2.4).

Origination in the kitchens

The actions of doing and watching were mutually involved in origination (Chapter 6). In origination, Max initiated action on work activities and contributed meaningfully to them. In this way, he fitted himself into work processes. As his originations grew in sophistication,

Max established a legitimate presence in the kitchen as a bona fide worker amongst other full-time workers. The concepts of origination and legitimate presence will be discussed in more detail in the following section, Section 8.2.

Talk in the kitchens

Talk between workers and trainees was minimal. Verbal interactions involved few exchanges and were limited in number and scope. Interactions were typically initiated by workers, who controlled the content and trajectory of the interaction, and trainees' physical actions rather than verbal ones were elicited. A few workers however deviated from this general pattern of interaction with trainees. In these latter interactions, the mutual actions of workers and trainees contributed to extensive talk. These workers provided wide-ranging and explicit instruction and information. These interactions were dependent on an instructional relationship which was motivated as much by workers' own inclinations to mentor as it was by trainees' verbal actions in fostering and encouraging its development.

Aspects of trainee experience in this research may be relevant to other workplaces and support findings in future workplace research. Being 'frontstage' in situations that are not client-based and implicit validation are aspects of work that are seldom highlighted in workplace research; a possible reason for the former is that non client-based situations have received little attention in existing research and that for the latter is that it may be difficult to recover through non-ethnographic methods such as self-reports and interviews.

But it is conceivable that being 'frontstage' to an audience of co-workers and implicit validation, and the implications of these, are present in many workplaces. Being aware that their activity at work was always 'frontstage' and their work judged by immediate co-workers and others in the vicinity alerts workers, especially trainees whose work

performance is tied to the achievement of course requirements, to self-presentation matters in the management of positive impressions. Uncovering the implicitness of validation puts on record that, in some workplaces at least, validation is provided in varied ways and not solely through verbal means. These findings and implications highlight features of the workplace that have received little attention in workplace research.

The current study also contributes to the notion of participation in workplace learning research, specifically in terms of the enactment of participation and the action of watching as a form of tangential participation. Although it is generally accepted that participation in work activities is crucial for workplace learning (Lave and Wenger 1991; Eraut 2004; Billett 2000, 2004), the topic of participation itself has often been treated as a taken-for-granted fact.

In his research on workplace learning, Eraut found four work activities that regularly gave rise to learning – participation in group activities, working alongside others, tackling challenging tasks and working with clients (2004:266). In two of these processes, participation was mentioned: ‘participation in group activities included teamworking’ (ibid.) and ‘working alongside others allows people to observe and listen to others at work and to participate in activities’. Although the ‘learning activities’ involved in these processes such as practising and refining skills, trial and error and problem solving were described (2004:267), specific details of participation had been omitted. Likewise, Billett argues that participation in work activities contributed significantly to the development of workplace knowledge, stating that this engagement and the guidance available in everyday participation assisted and strengthened individuals’ learning (2000:1). But the writer did not delve into what participation actually involved.

The omission of the enactment of participation i.e. what did it mean to participate and how individuals participated is conceivably the result of a global rather than local orientation in

these studies, which have produced rich insights on the broader topic of workplace learning and the notion itself of participation in the learning process. Fuller and Unwin (2003) provide some information about what participation involved and the available opportunities for learning. They showed that apprentices participated in multiple communities of practice including college-based communities and getting involved in the local community (2003:414-415).

The current study contributes to research on workplace learning by eliciting the minutiae of participation, making transparent the specific activities involved in the enactment of participation in localised interactions. It described explicit forms of participation, namely *doing*, *watching* and *origination* and provided specific details of each. It also further explicated what *doing* involved. Eraut found that ‘much learning at work occurs through doing things’ (2004:269). This research has showed that ‘doing things’ at work involved varying types – doing tasks (ad-hoc and routine) and doing Nellie’s work, and the nature of instruction in each type differed.

In addition, this research has also paid close attention to *watching* which, though acknowledged as a resource for workplace learning, has rarely been given much attention and is usually made in passing references. Billett (2001:201) mentions observation in passing, citing it as one of the key sources for workers to learn. In describing legitimate peripherality, Lave and Wenger conflate *watching*, or observation, with participation:

To begin with, newcomers’ legitimate peripherality provides them with more than an “observational” lookout post: It crucially involves *participation* as a way of learning – both absorbing and being absorbed in – the “culture of practice” (1991:95, emphasis in original).

This research treated watching as a topic for investigation. It unpacked the activities involved in *watching* and showed how a trainee displayed attempts to learn through it: the systematic patterns found in Max’s *watching* showed its enactment in active and strategic

ways with specific activities attached to each. Moreover this analysis of *watching* has produced concrete terms for its discussion. Rather than general statements e.g. 'watching is involved in workplace learning' or 'one watches others to learn', *watching* was discussed as an active and strategic approach towards learning, based in the actions taken up in *watching* i.e. making notes, asking questions, positioning oneself. Finally *watching* was also shown to be more than simply information-gathering. When trainees directly participated in work activities (e.g. through doing tasks), they had a valid role as a worker but when they did not (because there was no opportunity to do so or they were prevented from doing so), they 'found' a role for themselves in which to tangentially participate in the kitchens. Through *watching*, they claimed a legitimate presence in a production environment where every worker should in fact be actively participating (Section 5.2.2).

8.1.1 Practical implications

Implicitness of the learning situation at work

Trainees often complained that they were not learning anything, even as they were working every day. In fact, learning at work involved a strong element of implicitness that can be missed by trainees. Highlighting and spelling out the implications of this potentially deepens their understanding of work placement and supports them in maximising their learning opportunities at work.

Firstly learning and working were not separate activities or events that can be clearly marked out. Rather, as trainees kept working, they kept on learning. At work placement, learning was implicit; learning was part of working and vice versa. As Eraut has observed of adult workers, the implicit, embedded learning at the workplace may not always be discerned by the learners themselves:

Most respondents still equate learning with formal education and training, and assume that working and learning are two quite separate activities that never

overlap, whereas our findings have always demonstrated the opposite, i.e. that most workplace learning occurs on the job rather than off the job. (2004:249)

Indeed the learning process at work might be mistaken as simply task accomplishment. When directed to a task or shown a procedure, trainees took it as instruction for doing a task rather than an aspect of the overall learning involved in working as a cook. This is perhaps unsurprising given that often, instruction was in the form of directives ('do this', 'get that') without any further explanation, for example of how the task fitted into the work process. In fact the tasks were not simply errands; they were part of the overall work a cook did during their working day and were what constituted 'work' in this setting. Max appeared to appreciate this situation and subsequently originated the same tasks on a regular basis. In doing the tasks on his own without workers' further instruction, he was implicitly learning what was needed and when, as well as displaying his knowledge of the routines and duties of a cook. This kind of learning situation is implicit and clearly contrasts with what trainees were accustomed to at college where content to be learned was explicitly known and instructional procedures involved explicit information-giving and detail.

Secondly, work was in the form of *doing* and this meant that in order to learn, trainees needed to *do*. *Doing* provided learning opportunities in a range of ways including instruction on tasks, physical demonstration, repeated doing and, making mistakes and being corrected.

Thirdly, work roles and tasks had to be 'found'. *Doing* entailed having tasks to be done. New to the work environment and unfamiliar with the activities, trainees expected to be assigned tasks. However tasks were not always forthcoming. Trainees had to 'find' a role or tasks for themselves in order to learn by *doing*. This role might be, in the first instance, that of an observer who actively and strategically watched ongoing activities. Through 'tuning in'

to the work setting, information on available ways to contribute meaningfully may be gathered, and this provides the basis for *doing* in the form of origination and hence getting involved in *doing*, learning and working.

Finally, assessment of their performance helped trainees know if their actions could be replicated or if corrections were needed. However, explicit validation was rare. Validation was often implicit in the actions of workers. At work placement, trainees may have to expect that validation was to be constructed through non-verbal, inexplicit means.

Building relationships

In the professional kitchen, teaching someone while working in the kitchen was not practical for the chef, as Anne Willan, the respected cooking teacher, cookbook author and founder of the prestigious Ecole de Cuisine La Varenne has said:

I think it is almost impossible to learn to cook completely on the job. Sure, if you have the quite extraordinary luck to find an outstanding chef who's willing to take the time to teach you, then perhaps in that exceptional case, you can get really good training on the job...very few chefs have the ability, the time and the willingness to pass on everything they know to young people working in the kitchen. It just isn't practical. You're under pressure; you want to go and do the orders for tomorrow's food; you've got someone on the telephone; you can't spend time saying to somebody, "Don't chop like that, chop like this." (cited in Fine 1996b:52)

Indeed one had to have 'extraordinary luck to find an outstanding chef who's willing to take the time to teach you'. Workers had few verbal interactions with trainees and most interactions were transactional.

In cases of extended interactions however, workers provided important information that might not be easily accessible through other means for example, doing tasks. These extended interactions were therefore invaluable. They were also a function of instructional relationships that were built between workers and trainees. Although much depended on

workers' inclination to instruct trainees, trainees' verbal actions in building instructional relationships and encouraging interactions were also necessary.

Given that in talk, trainees were invariably positioned as learners who were inexperienced and relatively unknowledgeable, displaying an orientation to this positioning seemed sensible. It was clear that Max was competent in his work and performed very much as a professional worker in carrying out his duties. In talk however, the professional identity constructed through his physical actions took a backseat to that of a learner requiring instruction and information from others. Max's verbal actions positioned him as less knowledgeable than the workers, oriented to relative instructor-learner positionings in instructional relationships and encouraged workers to provide more information.

Admittedly, building these relationships and leveraging potential learning opportunities therein is beyond trainees' control; they may not find workers who had any interest in extended interactions with them. But when the opportunity arose, trainees' explicit orientation to a learner positioning could serve as a powerful inducement for information provision and encourage the construction of instructional relationships with workers.

Three areas of information from this research may be relevant to college administrators as well as trainees making the transition from college to the workplace: the role of a trainee, the nature of workplace instruction, and general workplace expectations. As agreed with the principal and the director of the school of hospitality at Westfield College, I will share the results of the research with them, college trainers and career counsellors via platforms such as the annual teacher's conference, seminars and workshops.

Relevant information repackaged for specific purposes could also be made available on online career advice and course information pages as well as in printed information packs

distributed at college recruitment, prior to the beginning of work placement and upon college graduation.

I also have plans to develop a practical toolkit, based on an ethical code of practice, that may be useful to the three main parties involved in work placement i.e. college administrators, workplace managers and trainees. The proposed code of practice delineates the roles and responsibilities of each party, provides a structure to facilitate the training outcomes of work placement and coordinates the accomplishment of the different goals of the parties involved.

8.2 Origination and legitimate presence

The concepts of origination and legitimate presence were proposed as substantive constructs for interpreting a specific action and activity in the kitchens. Adapted and developed from Whyte (1949), the concept of origination involves voluntarily bringing about work, carrying it out and contributing to the work situation. It entailed watching and making judgements about what to do, when to do it and how, as well as doing in the form of executing the action. Origination was a concrete resource for learning: mistakes made in origination, like those in the action of doing, were immediately corrected before the trainee and provided the latter with information on future similar actions. Origination also fitted the trainees into work processes and reshaped their participation in the kitchens. It was also found to be an imperative practice in kitchen work and projected positive impressions of trainees.

The concept of legitimate presence was introduced in two places. It was first mentioned as providing a valid role to the trainee when they participated in work tangentially through watching. Given that they were instructed to watch and that only they, as trainees, could watch and not take part in ongoing work, watching provided them with a valid position, or

a legitimate presence, in the kitchens. The concept of legitimate presence was further developed in regard to origination. As Max's originations grew in sophistication from doing simple tasks to staking claims on kitchen responsibilities, he carved out a valid position for himself and claimed a legitimate presence in the kitchen.

The concepts of origination and legitimate presence may have emerged in the work setting of the professional kitchen but it is possible that they are recoverable from other contexts too. Workers might originate in order to make themselves useful, support the work of others or simply to pass the time in lulls between work tasks. It is also conceivable that as their originations intensified, they claimed work responsibilities to themselves and gradually, a legitimate presence and increasing membership in the work community. There is room for further research into similar participation patterns based on origination and establishing legitimate presence. The general application and value of these constructs, mutually and separately, in other work situations also await further research.

Origination and workplace support

Origination conceivably owed much to Max's personal inclinations. But its emergence is also emblematic of the particular conditions for participation in the work setting. Max originated in a context that tended to preclude trainee participation. As James observed in her study of the professional kitchen as a learning environment, 'the goal of a kitchen is to produce meals with the most important factor being a financial one (such as making a profit or keeping to a budget), not an altruistic ideal of chefs wanting to pass on knowledge and skill' (2006:20). Kitchens were first and foremost a production environment and workers' main priority was the production of meals, which often has to be managed under unpredictable and stressful temporal pressures (Fine 1996a:60-67). Passing on knowledge, providing instruction or facilitating any other pedagogically-oriented activities such as trainee participation in work activities were of secondary concern to workers. As workers

focused on carrying out their work, trainees were often excluded from participation and not provided with explicit direction on tasks. They responded to these situations by assuming the role of observer. In addition to this, Max's other response was to participate through origination.

Had the participatory conditions been different, for example if there were a dedicated individual mentoring the trainees, a structured training programme in which trainees had clearly defined work roles and responsibilities, or if workers were more committed to training, it is questionable if origination would have been discernible in the data. Max would simply have been required to do, and therefore would have been doing, the exact tasks expected of him instead of originating. The emergence of origination is rather suggestive of the extent of workplace support for trainee participation and seems to correspond negatively with the latter. Identifying contexts that compel origination is potentially useful, not least because the correspondence between origination and workplace support has implications on the design of placement programmes in workplaces and the type of approach favorable to trainees for learning at work placement.

In contexts where originations are highly necessary and which imply low workplace support, there is clearly a need to address the 'workplace curriculum' (Fuller and Unwin 2003) and make arrangements that would better support trainee learning. Such arrangements could be built on the 'expansive' features that promote trainee participation suggested in Fuller and Unwin (2003:411), for example, 'explicit institutional recognition of, and support for apprentices' status as learner' and having a 'named individual [who] acts as dedicated support to apprentices' (ibid.). Instead of a work-focused approach to the induction of trainees, a trainee-focused approach and an orientation to them as learners may better facilitate their development of professional competence. An ethics-based approach which gives due regard to the mutual goals of the parties involved and the joint accomplishment of those goals may also be worth consideration.

In the same contexts, from the trainees' perspective, an active approach to learning and working would be favorable to their professional development. Although an active approach to learning is important in any learning situation, it is even more compelling in contexts of low workplace support. Certainly it might not be possible to persuade workers in a production environment, especially one as time-pressured as the professional kitchen, to rebalance their priorities between production and pedagogy. In such a context, an active approach to learning and working, as exemplified by Max in the actions of origination and watching, allowed the trainee to shape his participation and maximise learning opportunities.

Origination, an active approach and agency

In much early sociological work on vocational trainees at work, writers focused on the socially-reproductive function of vocational education (e.g. working-class students to working-class jobs) and largely ignored the role of individual agency (Avis 1994). In the early 2000s, agency received more attention and played a more prominent role in vocational learning (e.g. Colley et al. 2003 and Tanggaard 2005).

In workplaces, Billett has written widely on the exercise of agency in individuals' participation at work (e.g. Billett 2005, 2001). The writer proposes the notion of co-participation to capture the interaction between workplace affordances and individual agency as the basis for understanding learning at work (2004). He argues that the affordances provided by the workplace for access to learning such as guidance from workers and activities individuals were permitted and supported to participate in were not sufficient to encourage learning. Much also depended on individual agency, i.e. how individuals elected to engage with work activities and shape what they learned. He showed that even if the workplace were highly 'invitational', individual agency had the potential to direct individuals away from participation, engagement with the support available and

appropriation of the knowledge made accessible (Billett 2001). Blaka and Filstad (2007) showed that newcomer midwives and real estate agents were agentic in pro-actively engaging in available learning opportunities and Tanggaard (2005) showed apprentices initiating instruction from regular workers and seeking out their own preferred instructors. Significantly, although the organisation of apprenticeship participation in certain workplaces limited opportunities for new learning, the agency of apprentices kept them in the job (Lyngsnes and Rismark 2011).

The current study joins existing research in highlighting evidence of individual agency at work and particularly, in accessing learning opportunities. Max's agency in coping with and overcoming to some extent the limits of his participation is manifestly demonstrated in his originations, the active and strategic ways in which he sought and situated himself in positions to watch the activity of others as well as the process of 'getting to Nellie' (Section 5.1.6). Through these agentic actions, Max actively shaped his participation and learning opportunities in the work setting.

In addition, the current study also raises several agency-related issues that may be explored in further research. Though agency is often well-regarded and promoted where learning is concerned, it is arguable if indeed it should be valued in certain situations. Clearly, origination was advantageous and trainees' agentic actions in regard to it should be encouraged. However, in exercising agency and actively shaping what they learnt, trainees also made independent choices on which instructions to accept and which to reject (Section 5.1.4). As a result, aspects and practices of their chosen trade were disregarded. This undoubtedly has implications on their professional development.

Moreover, Max's agentic actions also had implications on his work role and responsibilities in the kitchen. In the case of 'getting to Nellie', it is questionable if his agentic action there should be positively regarded. In getting to Nellie, Max moved into position to work with

particular Nellies and in one instance to carry out their work in their absence. But workers in a kitchen worked at specific stations. In making the movement, Max was not only moving into another worker's station, he had also abandoned his own. Max himself appeared to treat his movement as a questionable activity and did not make attempts other than on one occasion when he did so during a kitchen rush, which could at least be interpreted as helping out a co-worker who was overwhelmed by the surge in orders.

These examples question the uniformly positive value often attached to agency in learning and the extent to which agency should be encouraged. They also raise questions about the appropriate bases for making judgments on exercising one's agency in the workplace and highlight the complexities involved in agentic actions.

A second issue concerns the potentially bounded character of agency in workplaces, which appears so far to have been unexamined in the relevant research. The boundaries of agency are evident in Max's permission-seeking behaviour prior to certain originations (e.g. Section 6.5) and in the selection of particular normed ways of acting in origination (Section 6.8). Max was agentic and productive as a worker and learner in certain cases but he also withheld this productive agency in others; and even within the same agentic act, Max could exercise his agency only to a certain extent. The potential bounded-ness of agency in the workplace is a topic that could be explored in further research.

Finally, the issues raised here provide some suggestion of the potential value in studying agency in terms of 'learning a subject' in contrast to 'learning about the self as a "subject"' (Ecclestone 2007) and give support to Ecclestone's call for further research in the former. In the existing research on agency, Ecclestone notes the rise of an emphasis on identity as researchers oriented to people's capacity to shape their own destinies and a conspicuous 'silence' on studies concerning 'agency and progression in ideas, in thinking and learning in relation to specific subjects, skills or crafts' (2007:130). While the dominant orientation is

illuminating on issues ‘around the self’, it obscures subject learning and ‘how education helps people think and act for themselves and, crucially, what they think and act *about*’ (ibid., emphasis in original).

The issues raised here provide hints of new insights that may be gleaned from studying agency in the ‘learning [of] a subject’ instead of ‘learning about the individual’. For example, in response to Ecclestone’s call and in the context of this research i.e. learning the ‘subject’ of professional cooking, that would involve problematizing the generally positive value of agency and articulating the limits to agency in a workplace learning situation. The insights generated could produce a more holistic treatment of the concept in learning-related research.

8.3 Research in minimal talk contexts

Linguistic research in a minimal talk context

Although kitchens were lively places, they were a minimal talk context as far as trainees were concerned. The general character of talk between workers and trainees was worker-initiated, transactional and minimal. Often as trainees worked on their tasks, they were left alone for long stretches of time and had few verbal interactions with anyone.

Though rare, extensive talk was invaluablely important when it occurred. These interactions presented learning opportunities through talk and instruction was made explicit. Wide-ranging knowledge was shared including that which might not have been accessible through doing and watching, specific knowledge to enable trainees to work competently in particular kitchens (Section 7.3) as well as ‘good to have’ knowledge for an aspiring cook (Section 7.5).

The current study illustrates the possibility of carrying out linguistic research in a minimal talk context. The fact of extended interactions in an overwhelmingly minimal talk context

made these interactions remarkable. One is compelled to probe them, asking questions about the interactions, the fact of their occurrence in relation to the wider context of minimal talk and the relationships between participants. In the current study, the extended interactions were a function of instructional relationships actively constructed by workers and trainees, and they produced learning opportunities in a different mode (talk) than the usual actions of doing and watching.

The findings on instructional relationships in the current study reinforce those in existing research. The quality of relationships in the workplace and its influence on learning opportunities has often been reported (Blaka and Filstad 2007, Tanggaard 2005, Eraut 2004). Blaka and Filstad (2007:69) in particular have also noted the importance of the quality of the dialogue between workers and newcomers.

In addition, they add a further dimension to the existing findings through the analysis of talk. The study showed empirically how instructional relationships were built by the participants and so grounds findings about relationships in 'the hard currency of defensible analysis' (Schegloff 1992:106). The analysis examined the mutual actions of workers and trainee in talk and showed participants orienting to relative positionings as instructor and learner, more knowledgeable and less knowledgeable, information- and instruction-giver and recipient (Section 7.4). It also showed how a particular worker's actions were nurturing and considerate to a trainee's professional, social and learning needs, and that the trainee's interactional behaviour was altered accordingly (Section 7.2). Finally it also showed that just as workers' actions were important in providing instruction and information in the instructional relationship, the trainee's actions in first and second position were equally necessary in the ongoing development of that relationship (Section 7.4) and in sustaining extended interactions (Section and 7.5).

Linguistic ethnography (LE) in minimal talk, 'blue-collar' contexts

The current study also illustrates the possibility of carrying out a linguistic ethnography in a minimal talk context and a 'blue-collar workplace' (Holmes and Stubbe 2003:25). We should first ask how the current study may be considered a linguistic ethnography. For me, the adoption of an ethnographic methodology and the analysis of part of that data through linguistically-informed tools situates the study in LE. The necessity for linguistic data analysis and the subsequent relatively 'lower-status' positioning of that data within the overall thesis was directly a result of the ethnographic approach. Specifically, the ethnography provided insights into where exactly the role of language and talk belonged in the overall picture of the experience in the kitchens. In this sense, the linguistics in this study was subservient to the ethnography. But looked another way, it brought out something important in the trainee experience and compelled a close examination for what it could tell us about that experience. In this latter sense, the linguistic data enhanced the ethnography.

My perception of LE aside, articles published in a Special Issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* and the influential *Encyclopedia of Language and Education* edited by Kendall King and Nancy Hornberger are instructive about the general orientation of LE. Although 'what is' and 'what is not' distinctive about LE may not have been resolved (Creese 2008:229), LE holds that language and the social world are 'mutually shaping' and that close analysis of language use can provide insights into aspects of everyday activity (Rampton et al. 2004:2). The orientation to LE in this research is empirically reflected in the study of relationships established in the kitchens and the interactions that iteratively produced and re-produced those relationships. The specifics of this involved the analysis of ethnographic and linguistic data in a process that '[tied] ethnography down' and '[opened] linguistics up' (Rampton et al. 2004:4). The ethnography produced insights into the trainee experience including the place of extended interactions in a minimal talk context and the

linguistic analysis closely examined those interactions for the relationships they constructed.

But if the principles and procedures followed situate the current study in LE, existing trends in LE appear to wrest it from this research space. Taking 'language' in its broadest sense to include spoken languages, written texts and talk, studies in LE have mostly focused on language: e.g. spoken languages and the interaction of societal and local discourses (Creese 2003); language policy and planning (Hornberger and Johnson 2007); and talk (Copland 2012, Maybin 2006, Rampton 2006). The five lines of research mentioned in a collaborative paper by the coordinating committee of the UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum (Rampton et al. 2004:9-11) as having contributed to contemporary UK LE practice also emphasise language: New Literacy Studies, Interactional Sociolinguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, neo-Vygotskian research on language and cognitive development, and interpretive applied linguistics for language teaching.

Our focus depends on what it is we study. My focus was on trainees' experience at work placement instead of on language per se. Although linguistic data in the form of audio-recordings of interactions was collected, that data had to be understood and analysed in the context of the overall ethnography. The ethnographic methodology then prompted linguistic data analysis and a linguistic ethnography in which both the ethnographic and linguistic data were of significance but to varying degrees.

If the current study is taken as an example of LE based on the principles and procedures followed, it demonstrates a case for doing research in a context where language is minimal and plays a relatively minor role in comparison to other data. More specifically, it illustrates the possibility of doing a linguistic ethnography in a context of minimal talk.

The current study also raises the implication that an LE approach might be explored in areas of research that have thus far been neglected in applied linguistics. One such area is blue-collar workplaces where talk is not typically the main work activity of participants. There has been to date a long tradition of workplace research but studies have tended to concentrate on 'specialised frontstage contexts' (Holmes and Stubbe 2003:19) and settings with a 'talk bias' (Hak 1999:427) for example, business meetings and interactions between doctor-patient, lawyer-defendant, worker-client (Sarangi and Roberts 1999, Drew and Heritage 1992). As Hak wrote despairingly of the talk bias in workplace studies in healthcare:

If we would not know what goes on in hospitals by other means than through conversation analysis and discourse analysis we would think that almost all work done in hospitals is done by doctors (or doctors in training) and that their work mainly consists of talking to patients and to each other. (1999:440)

The same can be said of the broader orientation to white-collar workplaces – what we know about workplaces is limited to certain types of workplaces; and what we know about these workplaces is confined to certain types of interactions and certain types of work. The concentration of studies in particular workplaces is prevalent not only in Conversation Analytic- and Discourse Analytic-based studies but also in language socialisation (e.g. Erickson 1999, Hobbs 2004, Atkinson 1995 and Cicourel 1999 in medicine; Arakelian 2009, Parks and Maguire 1999 in nursing). Studies such as Holmes and Stubbe (2003) on the factory floor are rare.

If the focus on language is shifted slightly, then it is possible not to be wary of areas in workplaces just because there may be little talk (e.g. work activities such as preparing meals in cafeterias) and of passing up on contexts that seem 'un analyse-able' because there is little 'text' (such as interactions involving physical medical examination, Hak's example). Blue-collar workplaces where there is little talk and little text do not have to be

avoided. LE is well-positioned, and well-suited given its interdisciplinarity, to produce insights on communicative and work practices and interpersonal relationships between workers in a wider range of workplaces than other approaches that focus wholly and specifically on linguistic data.

It may be that studies in blue-collar workplaces would lean towards the ethnographic end but this proportionality between linguistics and ethnography is not in fact troubling for LE. At the risk of over-simplifying the complexity in Creese's (2003) analysis, we may consider the development of her analysis as illustration. The writer looks at how languages (English and Turkish) were used by individuals in taking up positions around an accusation made by one group of students in a multi-lingual London school. In her analysis, she first considers two student-produced texts (language), one from a group of students demonstrating outside the school and another by students opposing the account made in the text from the former group. This is then followed by an analysis of how different individuals positioned themselves with respect to the demonstration. This latter analysis, substantially longer and including more data, relied exclusively on ethnographic fieldnotes (ethnography).

Rampton's (2007:589) observation of the research programmes currently within the Linguistic Ethnography Forum also provides assurance: 'In some of these research programmes, then, the ethnography was/is more pronounced than in others, and they have tended to prioritise different issues'. Clearly, LE is not about privileging linguistics or ethnography. And if one took a broader view of the 'prioritising of different issues' (albeit in Rampton's example, the issues were all language-focused), then our focus need not always be on language per se. LE, unlike other more 'text'-oriented lines of research, is in a good position to venture into new and relatively uncharted territories.

The current study in a professional kitchen provides an example of LE research in a blue-collar workplace. As my focus was on trainees and workers, I did not consider interactions involving other participants such as among kitchen workers or between kitchen workers and restaurant servers, whose work must be coordinated for things to run smoothly but whose relationships were always fraught with tension and power issues. Unlike what is often portrayed on TV, this latter relationship rather than that between kitchen workers is the site of most of the fiery outbursts I've seen in the kitchens. Although there is work on relationships in kitchen ethnographies produced in the field of sociology (Demetry 2013, Fine 1996b, Whyte 1949), the language-related business in the relationships is taken for granted. An LE study here for example holds the promise of contributing to insights from other academic disciplines.

8.4 Limitations

Although the depiction of trainees' placement experience was necessarily selective, I believe it is a fair rendering of the more salient aspects of their day-to-day lives in the kitchens. But there are also a number of limitations to the study. In what follows I address some of these.

Video-recordings

The first is that given the context which overwhelmingly involved embodied action, video recordings would provide a useful record of non-verbal actions, physical orientations and movements, other workers and their actions etc. But video-recording was not feasible in the context. Workers and trainees were constantly moving about in the course of their work and it would have been pointless to locate a video-camera in any fixed location.

Moreover, there was hardly any room in the kitchens to locate a video-camera. I was constantly working out where to stand and to find my own space in the kitchens, near

enough to the trainees to observe and audio-record interactions but away enough to avoid being a hindrance to their movements and those of other workers. There was little room for me to observe and hardly any for a video-camera.

There was the option of a hand-held video-camera but between that and making notes, I decided that the latter was more important. A video-recording would provide a supplementary source of data but ultimately it was no substitute for actually being there and going through the experience. Moreover the decision not to use a video-camera pushed me to be ever more focused on my observation and meticulous in my note-taking.

Interview data

Another necessary compromise lay in my approach to interviewing. Typically in the interviews, I had a range of issues I intended to cover but how the issues were taken up and developed was left very much to the flow of the discussion. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:117) point out, these interviews are not simply conversations because the ethnographer has a research agenda and must retain control over the proceedings.

I did not often exercise this control. In my attempt to maintain the relaxed and close nature of my friendship with the trainees, I did not want to interrupt or lead them away from topics that they seemed more interested to share with me. As a consequence, I ran out of time to cover the agenda I had in mind with some trainees. Thus although I met with quite a few trainees whilst they were doing their placement in other kitchens, some of the interview data collected was not relevant. As my study was not interview-based, this issue did not significantly affect my research.

A second issue was that I sometimes had difficulty eliciting responses from Max which might have enhanced the interpretation of some of my data. To some extent, this might have something to do with the nature of the questions I asked which perhaps seemed

naïve and superfluous to Max. For example, when I asked Max why he did not approach Eric for a recipe he wanted, he responded with 'You don't know meh?' which implied that he expected me to know the reason without having to ask him. Other questions seemed superfluous. When I asked Max if Eric allowed him to cook on one of the days that I was not at work with him, Max nodded in reply and then added 'he won't let me cook fully mah'. His reply suggested the obviousness of his statement and I hesitated to probe it. Over time, I developed a sense of 'what, when, and under what circumstances it is appropriate to ask something, and when it is better to remain quiet' (Wolcott 1995:102); sometimes this meant 'holding questions for later', sometimes 'holding them forever' (ibid). In situations of the latter, I have had to leave out data for which I was not confident of my own interpretation without Max's input.

Focus on physical actions

It is fair to question the uneven focus on other actions more than talk and a reliance on the ethnographic more than linguistic data in the current study. Right from the start of fieldwork, it was evident that talk in my particular setting did not have a central place unlike in other workplaces that have been widely researched e.g. medical and nursing, law, classrooms and offices.

But what I did not expect was that there was so little talk at all to be collected and analysed. Kitchens were lively places and workers verbally interacted with one another throughout the day, even if fleetingly and sporadically. But worker-trainee talk was limited and moreover, minimal. This posed a challenge for my original intention to study the discursive construction of professional identity.

I could have given up on the research site but I decided against it for practical reasons. By the time I began my fieldwork in the kitchens, I had already spent three months cultivating

rapport and developing friendships in the field as well as trying to understand my research participants' day-to-day lives. I had good relationships with many of them and I also felt that I was developing an emic perspective through my extensive interactions with them. I decided to stay with the kitchens. I continued to participate and observe, made fieldnotes and for what it was worth, persisted with my audio-recordings.

During the process of analysis, I continued to struggle with the lack of linguistic data and after six months of grappling with the issue, going through my recordings over and over again, transcribing as much talk as I could find, and still making no headway in finding 'sufficient' talk for analysis, I realised I was going about it the wrong way – I should not be 'forcing the data', so to speak. It was a difficult decision to make to think differently about whatever linguistic data I had but ultimately, I believe it was the right one:

Today I reached an epiphany of sorts and a decision. I realise I shouldn't be over-reacting about the paucity of 'linguistic data' (verbal exchanges). The fact is that there was minimal talk and I can't do anything about that. Directive utterances involved minimal talk; instructional interactions were based on physical demonstrations and talk was merely an accompaniment to the demonstration. Surrounding the demonstration there is talk in the form of instruction for task accomplishment (mostly still directives). Verbal exchanges in the kitchen were in fact minimal and don't allow for verbal actions from the trainees. How can they possibly construct identities in such talk? In fact they don't. They construct professional identities through their physical actions. They must do so to be taken as professionals and accepted as workers. Perhaps the most striking of these was origination in which Max independently of instruction but through observation and initiative generated and carried out relevant kitchen work. That is how he constructed himself professionally. However there were of course a few workers who engaged in extensive talk with Max, and looking at these interactions produced the same result: Max cannot construct himself professionally in these interactions. He meets with explicit constructions of him as learner and sensibly he assumes the construction and projects that identity, orienting to and seeking to orient workers to him as instructor and learner as well as getting them to talk (share information) and encouraging them to display their knowledge (not his own). Whilst his physical actions construct him as a worker, his verbal actions construct him as a trainee. (RD, 140531)

To describe the trainee experience accurately, it would be irresponsible of me to focus, just because I would be more comfortable, on something that played a minor (albeit important)

role in the trainees' everyday world. Talk was important in providing information that exceeded what could be expected from most workers and it allowed the opportunity to build important relationships but it also occurred with only a few individuals. To provide an undistorted representation of trainee experience, talk had to be seen and placed within the overall context of that experience.

I agree with Hak who points out that work settings involved more than isolated communication events carved out of the context of ongoing work activities and that one should have a sense of the work context (before isolating linguistic data for further analysis):

In other words, the study should not begin with identifying and recording talk ("text") which then, subsequently, could be analysed within the "con-text" of this specific setting, but the study should begin with getting a sense of the "context" in which then, subsequently, "texts" could be isolated for further analysis. (1999:435)

Hak's point was one of sequencing i.e. whether one ought to, to put it crudely, proceed from text to context or context to text. But the general thrust of his argument about getting a sense of the context before thinking about the 'texts' was a wake-up call for me in the situation I encountered. Kitchens were about embodied action and whilst talk had a place, its place needed to be understood within that context of embodied action. It would be plain wrong to pretend otherwise and so treat the talk as if it were pervasive and having the same status as the other actions, which an alternative presentation with a focus solely on linguistic analyses of the extended interactions would have suggested. The uneven focus on other actions more than talk is necessarily the case.

In this chapter, I discussed the outcomes and implications of this research as well as addressed some of its limitations. The main contributions this research makes lie in its empirical findings on the experience of trainees on work placement, the theoretical constructs of origination and legitimate presence, and the methodological approach of

using linguistic ethnography in a context of minimal talk. The limitations concerned data collection issues and the uneven focus on physical actions over talk. The following chapter concludes this research.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

This research has explored the day-to-day life of trainees in a particular workplace with the aim of illuminating their placement experience. It described trainee cooks' engagement with work in the professional kitchen, their actions and activities, sources of challenge and enjoyment and their interactions with others. The research reinforced existing findings and extended others in research on workplace learning, introduced theoretical concepts for interpreting actions in the work setting and demonstrated the use of a linguistic-ethnographic methodology in a minimal talk, blue-collar work context, which has not been widely studied in applied linguistics.

I began this research with an orientation to the student experience of vocational education and ultimately I hope the outcomes of the research are most useful to students themselves. Students often went into work placement 'cold', either not knowing what to expect and encountering a rude shock or finding a gulf between their expectations and the actual experience. Whilst formal training at college equipped them with the relevant competences, it only went so far in smoothing their transition to work. Max and his classmates' experience will hopefully inform students of what to expect and suggest ways of coping with work placement. That would achieve an important aim of this research and fulfil the hopes of my research participants when they opened up their lives to me, which Max summarised as, 'I hope it can shed some light into this industry for future students, what it takes to work in the kitchen' (Whatsapp chat, 140723). I am looking forward to sharing their experience with vocational students as well as individuals involved in supporting students' transition from college to work.

Doing this research has been deeply fulfilling for me in many ways. It has given me an insight into the final preparatory phase of vocational education that I often wondered

about while teaching at a vocational college. But maybe more than that, I have thoroughly enjoyed being enriched by the experience.

Prior to embarking on research, I had viewed the task to be no more than the production of a piece of writing through nothing more than hard graft and some intellectual curiosity. I have since revised this view because it misses the deep personal impact that doing research had on me. Intellectually, it has made me more self-reflexive and open to re-assessing, changing, developing or rejecting prior personal biases, attitudes and views. Emotionally, there have been changes too. While I did not enjoy the innumerable moments of self-doubt and despair and having to somehow claw my way out over and over again, I have been through enough such cycles to confidently take on uncertain situations with more hope, optimism and resilience than I perhaps ever did before.

Professionally, I have developed broader interests. Engaging with linguistic ethnography has piqued my interest in methodological issues in research. The 'old' me viewed research methodology as a means to an end and reading about approaches to research, data collection and analysis, ethical issues etc. was a dull though necessary part of the process before I could get to the exciting stage of carrying out data collection and analysis. But I have trouble now turning away from method-related articles in the contents pages of journals even if they are not the focus of my literature search. Using linguistic ethnography in a minimal talk context has also made me keen to explore its purchase in more such contexts; where talk has little place in work activities, what is talk 'doing' among participants and to what ends in terms of work?

I have also become interested in matters related to work placement. I am excited by what I have learned but also by other questions prompted by my fieldwork such as the role of the work placement in relation to college instruction: Did it extend, supplement or contradict college education, how and in what ways? Why is the transition from college to work not

unproblematic and how can students be better supported in making the transition? There are myriad questions I am keen to explore. I am also keen on developing a practical toolkit with insights gained from this research and I hope it would be beneficial to the parties involved in work placement. My preliminary thoughts are that it would be based on an ethical code of practice that would support and accomplish the goals of college administrators, workplace managers and trainees going on work placement.

Doing this research has been an experience like no other and I hope that just as I have been rewarded by this process, so too will vocational students gain from the outcomes of the research. Ultimately the impact of education is felt most by students themselves. Given the aim of vocational education to prepare students for work, supporting and enhancing work placement through a deep understanding of that experience is fundamental in positively influencing its educational impact.

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Appendix 1 Transcription conventions (adapted from Richards 2003:173-174)

.	Falling intonation
,	Continuing contour
?	Questioning intonation
!	Exclamatory utterance
(2s.)	Pause of about 2 seconds
()	Micropause
[Overlap
=	Latched utterances
—	Emphasis
:	Sound stretching
(inaudible)	Unable to transcribe
(())	Other details
↑	Prominent rising intonation
↓	Prominent falling intonation
-	Abrupt cut-off
<i>Different font type</i>	Translated text

Appendix 2 Fieldwork schedule

Date	Data type	Site
09.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
10.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
11.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
16.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
17.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
18.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
19.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
23.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
24.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
25.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
26.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
	Interview	-
30.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
31.07.12	Fieldnotes	College
01.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
02.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
06.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
07.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
08.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
09.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
13.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
14.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
15.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
16.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
21.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
	Interview	-
22.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
	Interview	-
23.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
27.08.12	Interview	-
29.08.12	Fieldnotes	College
	Interview	-

Date	Data type	Site
04.09.12	Interview	-
10.09.12	Interview	-
25.09.12	Interview	-
27.09.12	Interview	-
28.09.12	Interview	-
01.10.12	Fieldnotes	Kaven's
03.10.12	Fieldnotes	Kaven's
04.10.12	Fieldnotes	Kaven's
05.10.12	Fieldnotes	Kaven's
06.10.12	Fieldnotes	Kaven's
08.10.12	Fieldnotes	Kaven's
09.10.12	Fieldnotes	Kaven's
12.10.12	Fieldnotes	Kaven's
13.10.12	Fieldnotes	Kaven's
15.10.12	Fieldnotes	Joai Asian
16.10.12	Fieldnotes	Joai Asian
18.10.12	Fieldnotes	Joai Asian
20.10.12	Fieldnotes	Joai Asian
22.10.12	Fieldnotes	Joai Asian
23.10.12	Interview	-
26.10.12	Fieldnotes	Joai Asian
01.11.12	Fieldnotes	Garde manger
02.11.12	Fieldnotes	Garde manger
05.11.12	Fieldnotes	Garde manger
06.11.12	Fieldnotes	Garde manger
07.11.12	Fieldnotes	Garde manger
	Interview	-

Date	Data type	Site
08.11.12	Fieldnotes	Garde manger
14.11.12	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
15.11.12	Interview	-
16.11.12	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
17.11.12	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
21.11.12	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
22.11.12	Interview	-
23.11.12	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
	Interview	-
24.11.12	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
25.11.12	Interview	-
26.11.12	Interview	-
27.11.12	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
29.11.12	Fieldnotes	Harajuku Street
30.11.12	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
02.12.12	Interview	-
03.12.12	Fieldnotes	Butchery
04.12.12	Fieldnotes	Butchery
05.12.12	Fieldnotes	Harajuku Street
10.12.12	Fieldnotes	Esbar
	Interview	-
11.12.12	Fieldnotes	Esbar
12.12.12	Fieldnotes	Harajuku Street
17.12.12	Fieldnotes	Patisserie
18.12.12	Fieldnotes	Patisserie
19.12.12	Fieldnotes	Harajuku Street
20.12.12	Fieldnotes	Patisserie

Date	Data type	Site
21.12.12	Fieldnotes	Patisserie
22.12.12	Fieldnotes	Patisserie
23.12.12	Fieldnotes	Patisserie
05.01.13	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
08.01.13	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
09.01.13	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
11.01.12	Fieldnotes	Maurie's
	Interview	-
12.01.12	Fieldnotes	Harajuku Street
13.01.13	Interview	-
15.01.13	Fieldnotes	Prome
18.01.13	Fieldnotes	Prome
19.01.12	Fieldnotes	Harajuku Street
20.01.13	Fieldnotes	Prome
	Interview	-
21.01.13	Fieldnotes	Prome
23.01.13	Fieldnotes	Prome
26.01.13	Fieldnotes	Prome
07.02.13	Interview	-
08.02.13	Interview	-

Appendix 3 Information sheet



Information Sheet 06.06.12

Researcher name: Pang Yen-ning

Project title: Learning in the vocational classroom

Purpose of the research

This is an invitation to participate in the research project stated above. The purpose of the project is to understand learning processes in the vocational classroom.

Method and demands on participants

As the research project involves understanding how and what students learn in the vocational context, I will observe, make notes and interview you on your teaching/learning experience.

▪ Observation

My research will involve joining you in lessons, common rooms, kitchens, etc., during which time I will observe what happens and take notes on this.

▪ Interviews

I may ask you to agree to an interview or interviews in which I will ask you about your experiences on the programme and your views on these.

▪ Audio- and/or video-recording and/or photographic images

I may ask to audio- and/or video-record lessons for the purposes of analysis. I may also take photographs in lessons or in other contexts, but if I do I will ensure that the permission of everyone in the photograph is obtained before using it in my research.

Privacy and confidentiality

The data that I have collected will be used solely for the purpose of the study and will be protected from any other use not related to the study. Confidentiality is assured, and you will not be identified in any part of the research. The data may be used (with any identifying features of individuals removed) for academic purposes such as publications and conference presentations.

Possible, risks, inconveniences and discomforts

I do not foresee any risks in your involvement with the project. Your participation in the study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time and withdraw any data that you have provided to that point without giving any reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Benefits of the research

This study will provide a basis for future decisions on the development of practices for teachers and students in vocational contexts. It is anticipated that findings from the study will be written up in a doctoral thesis, published in academic journals and presented at international conferences.

Please contact me for further information: pangyenning@gmail.com

Thank you for your interest in this study.

Appendix 4 Consent form



Consent Form 06.06.12

Researcher name: Pang Yen-ning

Project Title: Learning in the vocational classroom

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project dated 06.06.12 which I may keep for my records and that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.

I agree to take part in the above project and am willing to:

- be interviewed
- have my interview audio-recorded

I understand that my information will be held and processed for the following purposes:

- for data analysis in the project named above

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking
consent if different
from Researcher

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix 5 Research participants and reasons for selection

As mentioned in Section 3.1.4, my research participants fell into three main groups. The first two groups of research participants were a natural outcome of the difficulties with gaining access to placement kitchens, as I described in Section 3.1.3. As a result I observed the trainees who worked at the two establishments that permitted my access. Here, I provide further information on these trainees. Following this, I explain my reasons for selecting the third group of students whom I did not obtain permission to observe and whom I interviewed instead.

1. Trainees at TVC

Max

Max was 24 years old at the time of my fieldwork. Before joining the culinary course, he had studied but did not complete a mechanical engineering course. He took up the culinary course because of a 'passion' in cooking and believed that his passion would motivate him to do well on the course.

Max shone in the culinary course at college. He was one of the better-scoring students and classmates often consulted him on their work. His lecturers thought highly of him. In his final year in the course, Max was selected and groomed to represent the college in a culinary competition. One of Max's lecturers had commented that Max was diligent and possessed the proverbial X factor for becoming a chef: 'He's into it. He has the thing'.

At work placement Max received mixed comments on his work. Some chefs found him impatient and not thorough in doing his work while others praised him for his work attitude and competence. Max was well-regarded by the executive chef at TVC who offered him a full-time contract following the work placement.

Max took up the offer and joined the Prome kitchen at TVC. A year later, he was nominated by his chefs to take part in an international culinary competition. At the time of writing, Max continues to work at Prome.

Max was a typical student in a vocational college and in the culinary course. Like most vocational students, Max had a working class background and worked part-time. He was a little older than most and had taken up a previous vocational course; neither of these facts was unusual among vocational students. Vocational education was not compulsory in Singapore and many students took on jobs following their secondary education before deciding to join a vocational course. Others like Max took up vocational courses that they did not complete and subsequently switched to another course.

Max's reason for joining the culinary course was an interest in cooking and this was a typical reason among his classmates. Academically, Max was an average student and like many of his classmates and vocational students in general, Max only aimed 'to pass' the course.

Vincent

Twenty-two years old at the time of my fieldwork, Vincent was slightly older than the other trainees but younger than Max. Prior to joining the culinary course, Vincent had completed a business studies course but as he had little interest in making a career out of it, decided to try his hand at cooking because as he said, 'what else can I do?'. Academically, Vincent

was the highest-scoring among his peers in their first year at college and this made him interesting to study: how would he fare in a work environment?

At work placement, Vincent often complained about the work given to trainees and their exclusion from participation in service work. Gradually he seemed to lose interest in cooking as a career and started to contemplate a career in music and entertainment because he enjoyed music. Although Vincent was offered a full-time contract at TVC following the work placement, he decided that cooking was not for him and declined the offer, choosing instead a job in the telecommunications field.

Kyle

A year younger than Vincent, Kyle was an international student from Malaysia. He joined the culinary course in Singapore, paying twice what local students paid, because he believed that the qualification from the vocational college would lead him to a better-paying job as a cook in Singapore. Kyle was meticulous and paid much attention to details in his work. At college, he was well-regarded by his lecturers and peers for producing well-made cuts and having an eye for aesthetics in his food presentation.

Because Kyle did well in his culinary classes at college, I had expected him to shine at work placement and his experience might be revealing of the relationship between college instruction and the transition to the workplace. As it turned out, Kyle appeared to adapt less smoothly to work requirements than other trainees who did not fare as well at college. He was late on more occasions than workers could tolerate and a few chefs commented negatively on him. He was also thought to be working too slowly by one of the chefs who surmised that he was distracted by personal issues and questioned his professionalism.

Stanley and Justin

Stanley and Justin joined the vocational course immediately after their secondary education. They were average students at college although Stanley was on a few occasions praised in practical lessons for his well-made dishes. Although they enjoyed cooking, they were undecided about pursuing a career in it and planned to consider their career options only after completing compulsory military service upon graduation from the course. Work placement was an opportunity to see what a job in cooking was like.

Unlike Max, Vincent and Kyle, Stanley and Justin had little prior work experience and this made them interesting since they would be going on work placement with a 'blank slate'. They were diligent in their work, followed instructions well and seldom acted without workers' direction. More than the other trainees, they often compared their experience at work placement and their time at college.

2. Trainees at HS

Sophie

Sophie was 21 years old at the time of my fieldwork. Prior to joining the culinary course, she had taken a course in tourism. Sophie said her interest in cooking began when she was very young as she watched her grandmother cook. She believed that cooking ran in her family – her parents ran a food stall and her brother was working as chef. And she was inspired to be a chef herself. At college, Sophie put in great effort in her culinary lessons and once bought plates specially to display the food she prepared. Like Max, Sophie had also been selected to represent the college in a culinary competition. I decided that she could be my female 'foil' to Max: how would her experience, as a female in the male-dominated, physical environment of the professional kitchen, compare with Max's?

At work placement, Sophie did relatively well, albeit with some hiccups in the initial period. Together with Nurul and Stacy, she was close to being sacked from her first placement kitchen two months after they started but they resigned before it happened. Through a relative of Stacy's, the three trainees began working at HS. As described in Section 5.1.5, although she struggled with the role assigned to her, Sophie gradually managed it and in fact excelled in it.

Nurul

Nurul was a trainee working in the same kitchen as Sophie and as I was observing the latter, she became a natural choice. Like Stanley and Justin, Nurul had little experience of work prior to the work placement. At college, she was regularly late for lessons and seemed uninterested in them. She was frequently texting or surfing the internet on her smartphone and rarely turned in assignments.

At work placement, her employer complained about her in the initial period. Among his complaints were her truancy, and her lack of punctuality and initiative in working. Although I didn't speak with her much at college since she didn't seem very approachable, I began talking to her after hearing about her employer's intention to dismiss her which would potentially jeopardise her chances of graduation from the course. I worked with her to resolve her personal issues including calling her in the mornings to wake her up and making suggestions on possible solutions to other issues.

Nurul's case provided an opportunity for me to try applying the concept of origination to concrete work activities. The concept appeared to have 'worked'. Several weeks later, her employer reported an improvement in her behaviour in the kitchen and at the end of work placement, offered her a full-time position.

Stacy

Stacy was what may be described as a challenging student. She was slightly rebellious, temperamental and deeply suspicious of others. Because she was so, I wondered how she would cope away from the 'safety' of the college and doing real work in a real kitchen. But I was not sure that I would have her permission to observe her at work placement. At college, I had been unsuccessful in developing a good relationship with her and she made it clear that she did not appreciate being observed. At a practical lesson, I was watching her work when she looked up and told me harshly to go away because she couldn't work with me watching over her. A few weeks later and after what I had thought were pretty successful attempts at warming her up to me, I was watching her again and this time, she was less polite about my presence.

As the placement kitchen was small and she worked alongside Sophie and Nurul, I nonetheless observed Stacy along with the other two trainees. Like Nurul, Stacy was singled out by their employer for her poor work attitude and lack of initiative. In addition, she had been bold enough to watch video clips on her smartphone whilst the others worked. Since she did not seem open to my friendship, there was little I could do to advise or encourage her. Although he was clearly unhappy with her work attitude and performance, her employer kept her until the end of the placement period because as he said, it was too cruel to dismiss her and see her chalking up two dismissals in four months.

3. Participants at interviews

Daryl

Friendly and approachable, he was one of the first students to befriend me at college. He seemed to take his culinary lessons very seriously. He was neat and tidy in his work and

possessed an excellent attitude towards learning. I find him less self-conscious and more humble than Max and more open to making and learning from his mistakes. He was very active in Gina's lessons, asking pertinent questions and volunteering reasonable answers but he was totally switched off during non-culinary lessons.

I was gutted that I could not observe Daryl at his placement kitchen. I could see that Daryl was very passionate about the career. He had a good attitude and did well at college, and it would have been interesting to observe him. Since I could not do so, I regularly met him to chat about his experience. Daryl worked in a five-star hotel and seemed to have learned a lot during this time. Although he occasionally complained about a few of his co-workers and the sometimes-heavy workload, he generally seemed to enjoy the experience.

Benjamin and Trevor

Both chose the course because of an interest in cooking and the desire to learn more about it but apparently not necessarily to pursue a career in it. Benjamin said he wanted to further his studies in a different field after completing the culinary course. Trevor did not have plans to further his studies but he was certain that he did not want a career in cooking. He was turned off by what he knew about the working conditions in kitchens. He said that though he wanted to learn to cook as a home cook, he never intended to make a living from it. Both students said they took the work placement as an opportunity to confirm that they did not want a career in cooking. Benjamin and Trevor were interesting because of their lack of interest in the business and their having to persist for six months in a real kitchen environment.

Gabriel

In contrast to the other students whose socio-economic background was mostly working-class, Gabriel came from a relatively well-to-do family. At college, he did reasonably well in practical lessons but was disruptive in other lessons, entering and leaving the classroom at a whim and engaging in pranks and other shenanigans while lessons were in progress. I decided to interview him because I felt it would be interesting to understand how he got on as the lowest-ranked member in the strict hierarchical, top-down structure of the professional kitchen, given his indifference to authority.

As it turned out, Gabriel left his first kitchen after a month because he felt he wasn't learning anything there. He moved to a Western grill restaurant and seemed adapt well. Shortly after joining the second kitchen, he managed his own station as a saute chef. Gabriel said he was motivated for work at this latter kitchen and saw himself working as a cook in the future.

Ruth and Sufi

Ruth was a mature and responsible female Muslim student. I decided to interview her because she was female and would have to work in a male-dominated environment. Moreover as she was Muslim, I wondered how she would negotiate the business of tasting, a crucial and unavoidable part of being a cook. This was also the reason I decided to interview Sufi. I was interested in his experience working in an environment that might be challenging for a Muslim person. I wondered how he would cope with his work if he could not taste certain foods (that were not halal) or consume alcohol and whether he would face any problems with chefs/co-workers, and how this might affect his interest in cooking as a career.

As it turned out, I did not get much good data from Ruth. Perhaps it was the nature of the interview but my three interviews with Ruth yielded nothing more than talk about her

emotional feelings towards members of the opposite sex she worked with. Ruth always spoke freely and without hesitation or reluctance and I could tell she really wanted to talk but she mostly wanted to share with me her feelings about co-workers and would recount to me conversations she had with her close male colleagues or incidents that happened between them in the kitchen, how they ribbed each other while working etc.

During our final interview, I told her I really needed her answers to a few questions but she became tongue-tied and seemed stumped for answers. She would think for a while and then not be able to find the words to express herself. She seemed embarrassed about it and suggested that the recorder made her nervous. I guessed she just wasn't comfortable with the structured approach I adopted and I abandoned the interview.

Sufi on the other hand provided a wealth of information. Although he did not seem friendly at college, he always accepted my requests to meet while at work placement and was extremely forthcoming with his thoughts when we spoke.

Zachary

Recalling that college lecturers Gina and Shane had said they thought people like Zachary might find it hard to survive in the kitchen ('not street-smart', interpersonal issues), I decided to interview him while at work placement. I wanted to find out how he was doing and whether Gina and Shane's 'predictions' were accurate.

I realised after a few chats that I didn't enjoy talking to him very much because sometimes I just couldn't follow what he was trying to tell me. He also tended to digress and talk about his gardening hobby which I have little interest for. But he always seemed keen to meet for a chat and would ask to meet up every now and then. Zachary did provide good data when he stayed on-topic. His experience was very similar to several other trainees. For example, workers had commented that he was working far too slowly. Zachary's descriptions of his actions and responses to these comments provided suggestions on why working more efficiently may be difficult for newcomers to the kitchen environment.

Gerald and Terence

Gerald and Terence did not get along with the rest of the class who felt that they had 'an attitude'. They chose not to participate very much in class activities either. I sat beside them in class several times and found them to be rather conscientious students. They paid attention during lessons and made notes. They seemed mature and held different views on their lecturers from the others. I decided to interview them because they represented a different point of view from most of the other students.

Reuben

I shortlisted the students described above at college but during the work placement, I worried that I would not have sufficient material from the interviews and decided to rope in more students. Reuben was one of them. As he worked in the same placement kitchen as Daryl, I wondered if he would offer a different perspective from the latter. He turned out to be a very good interviewee. Like Sufi, he was extremely unself-conscious and seemed to revel in telling me every dirty little thing he did.

Pauline

I was close to and spoke regularly with one other student, Pauline, although I hadn't actually planned it. Pauline confided in me that her employer wanted to sack her and as her college lecturer was out of town, she asked if I would speak to her employer. She seemed desperate and I felt I couldn't refuse her. Pauline, like Nurul, joined the college from one of

two 'specialised' schools that catered to students who failed their primary school education. I decided to interview Pauline because of this background.

Appendix 6 Sample of fieldnotes (observation)

Sample of 'scratch notes': Kaven's, 121006

121006 -
Date: ~~120~~
Saturday.

10:05. G & I arrive at the kitchen. G checks the seafood and ~~replaces the~~ drains the water in the ~~seafood~~ seafood trays. Amy is already here and he is preparing the sauces and soups. G then replaces the trays to the chiller. The trays contain squid, prawn, crayfish, fish + lobster. G checks the greens for the salads, to see if the veg are still fresh and can be served (which are ~~served~~ served with the on the portobello mushroom dish. He also checks the rocket leaves which are served w the fire grass.

G checks the mqrds. & e pizza and replenishes the cheese.

11:05. G finishes his checks on the raw mqrds. I ask him who instructed him to do the checks. He says must ensure the mqrds are there so that ready and avail ~~at~~ so that it's easy to work later.

Amy asks G to get the chicken stock from TVA. Amy asks G to get a mushroom soup from the chiller. G does so and smells the soup, he finds it a little sour-smelling. He takes it to Amy who tells him that's prolly the smell of the chiller. He says just have to eat it and it'll smell fine. ~~And~~

Nurnberger

Butlet spread: sausages, sauer kraut, bratwurst, pork knuckle, wass beef. & German Pork Sausage, mashed potato.

And indeed, it was.

11:55. The kitchen has prepared the sauces and soups, and there is less activity now as we wait 4 to

G says he was out of yesterday too - gauld mushroom

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lunchtime crowd to come in. They start coming in around 12pm but most of them are having the buffet so there's not much activity now.

1228. About 6 tables are filled. # But no orders yet for TVG. Hong teaches G how to dice onions. ~~to start~~ He gets G to dice them then he dices them himself and asks G what's the diff. G replies # his (Hong's) was finer. Hong then shows G how to do it. I ask G if he was taught how to dice onions in school; he said yes and that he cut the onion the way he was taught in school. I ask if Chinese cuisine doesn't req. fine cutting of onions. He said yes, for Western cuisine, probably need more finely cut onion. Hong leaves him to practice on his own.

G is plating the fair grass dish. Hong shows him how to place the bread, rocket and fair grass ^{position} → on the plate.

Guerra's an order of Black Cod and G starts to cook it.

1225. Hong then teaches G to cook the Spanish Paella. ~~When the Oktoberfest~~ The Oktoberfest promo ends Sunday and the lunch menu reverts to a la carte. Two new dishes will be added - the # seafood + chicken paella.

As the paella bakes in the oven, Hong gets G to pack the fettucine in little bags, each

nothing 200 gm.

G + Amy communicate in Mandarin. Amy
seems keen to teach G.

Ask G his thoughts on the 1A after
this first week. He says he feels a
greater sense of responsibility now that
he's doing this full-time - like checking
freshness of seafood - if anything goes wrong,
he'd be held responsible. He says this
place is "okay la" and he's feeling - he feels
he's learning ~~some~~ ~~at the~~ how things work in
the kitchen!

Things quiet down in the kitchen. G, Gary + J stand
around and chat. Amy has ~~left~~ left & has lunch.
Arasu goes around packing up the place.

EV in fact didn't
turn up & work
on the
2nd
day!

Went to Fremantle Seafood market and chatted to Farzan and
Isaac. Their kitchen has 7 cooks and Farzan + Isaac are
mainly involved in production i.e. they have been tasked to
shuck oysters, cut the squid & fish into slices. They say
that much of what they do is simply standing and
cutting fish and other seafood. Farzan talked of
quitting ~~and~~ but Isaac was a lot more positive and
seemed to be coasting along fine. Farzan had previously
expressed his lack of interest in the course and during
his 1A seemed to confirm for him he didn't want to
pursue a career in this line. They also advised me
against ever doing @ their restaurant, and cited
two ~~fact~~ things done in the kitchen ~~that~~ that they
didn't feel ~~was~~ ^{right}: ① instead of giving a customer
his order of lobster pizza, the cooks used crayfish instead
and justified this by saying a customer won't know the difference

anyway and crayfish was cheaper. ② Instead of giving the customer the fish he ordered for his fish and chips dish, the cooks could substitute the the > expensive fish ordered by a customer with a cheaper fish, saying that once deep-fried, the customer can't taste the difference. Haha. They work straight shifts of 8 hours or maybe a 1 or 2 hr break but they have also been asked to work overtime. For eg. Isaac was scheduled to work 3-11pm today but was asked to come in at 10am instead. They will be paid overtime pay of \$6 per hour if they worked for more hours than this. This amount was considered v. low by Aaron and he said he'd rather have to work overtime. One of his gripes about this line is that he only gets 1 day off in a week and he said that doesn't give him enough time to spend w/ family and friends. Isaac, on the other hand, seemed ok with this and makes plans to meet up w/ friends after work / his shift ends i.e. 11pm.

A
cont'd.

7.05pm. We are back in the kitchen. G's shift was supposed to start @ 7.30pm. C1 and C3 are already busting around preparing a la carte dishes. G puts on his apron and hat, and stands by. Now he twirls and arranges the rocket leaves and places them on a plate, ready 4 = fore goes. The restaurant is full of diners. And there is a line of 6 order sheets.

is mentioned by a # of codes, sat. nights
are busy nights.

* Willie is @ curry station

An order of pizza comes in and G.
~~makes~~ prepares the pizza (taking the
flat pizza base from the chiller
and placing ingredients on it.)

G. plates another fore gras dish.

G. makes another pizza. C3 is busy
plating and organising the dishes
to be served. He gets the plates

out, laying them on the service table,
puts the garnish (side vegs), spoons
the mashed potato, reminds C1 of waiting
orders, monitors the orders coming in.

C1 ~~is~~ does all the cooking. G. works
on pizza orders.

And when C1 sends the meat / fish over
to C3's plates, C3 pours the sauce over it
and calls to servers using a walkie-
talkie to pick up the dishes and serve.

Mr. Tong: "I'm a bit nervous about this" (Aim to Tong.)
is trying to tell him to be afraid 2 make
mistakes.

Kevin

Shin

Tong watches as E chef's cook. Exec chef. Louis
is also present. He ~~notes to~~ points to a bowl
of edamame beans and asks Tong what they
were. Tong doesn't have a ans. and turns
red in the face. Chef. Louis smiles @ and tells

G. talks
about his
life in
Japan.
huge fight,
Andrew
stood up
for them.
Incident
also led
to E &
Rachel or
taking
part in
a major
competition.

him to ask whenever he doesn't know anything and I know eventually moved in his kitchen. Tony smiles ~~and~~ embarrassedly and nods.

8.05. I return to TVG. Tony tells me in every kitchen, the most imp. thing is teamwork, everyone knowing what the other person wants, and everyone helping out is each other.

8.10. G. makes another pizza ^{puts} / ingredients. + puts pizza in oven. An order of lobster thermidor comes in. Tony cuts the lobster up, removes a flesh. Elton stands beside him and watches. G. checks on the pizza, and shifts his position in the oven.

8. Wei Xie has been assigned to cleaning station just evening. He checks on the buffet spread regularly to ensure the chaffin dishes are full.

8.30. G. makes another pizza. An order of a pasta dish comes in. Tony asks G. to cook it. → veg. napolitan. Elton had taught G. to cook this a few days ago. G. cooks it under Tony's supervision and Tony is pleased with the result ("Okay for.")

An order for pasta vongole. Elton is tasked to cook it.

When he completes both dishes, he takes out his notebook and writes down the ingredients.

talk about Tony said
no good as 'stuck'
@ cleaning
station for
one doesn't
learn
anything.
He said
it was
almost
done
job &
if he ever
was asked
to do it
on a regular
basis, he'd
quit straight-
away.

chilli, garlic, spring onion, leant.

Apr. Amy asks G. to fry a plate of mussels. G does so and Amy is pleased w his dish.

9.30. Amy asks G. to make ~~pasta~~ another pasta dish - veg. napolita. The kitchen has quietened down. C3 goes around to kitchen picking up the ingredients to be stored away. Amy & G hang around. G waits 4 the call to 'fire' ~~the~~ another pasta dish.

0735. Just as the kitchen is ready to close, an order for 4 lobster thermidors, 1 black cod, 1 portobello comes in and Amy + C3 quickly start preparing the dish.

G's on plates 2 veg. napolita.

* Just due to other days, all comm. b/w Amy + G is in Mandarin. Less teaching/instruction this dinner shift since the kitchen is busy.

C3 prepares 2 lobster + G. observes by his side. G is now conversant w a # of dishes at end of week 1.)

Gary prepares 2 portobello mushrooms. G observes by his side, and asks him if 2 mushroom only needed 2x grilled. He notices that 2 button mushrooms have depleted in the chiller drawer and goes to 2 walk-in chiller to retrieve 5 of it.

07pm We wait ~~for~~ around 4 orders to come in.

3 people are cooking now - A, Gary & G. C3
has finished ~~the~~ partially completed the
~~the~~ packing of mugs and is now wiping
and washing trays & containers that were used.
G. helps to plate ~~the~~ lobster thermidors.
put cheese and other condiments on ~~the~~
~~the~~ lobster thermidors. C3 is @ ~~the~~
set table plating the lobster thermidors.

10:10. G. makes another 3 pizzas.

Sample of fieldnotes: Kaven's, 121006 [LAST 2 HOURS ONLY – OBSERVATION BEGAN AT 1055h]

Time	Observation	Notes
2005	Back at Kaven's, Weng takes a break from the cooking and tells me that the most important thing in a kitchen is teamwork and explains that everyone working together in the kitchen should know what the other cook wants and everyone should help the other out.	
2010	Max makes another pizza. An order for lobster thermidor comes in and Weng cuts a lobster up, removes the meat and places it in a pan to be fried. Max stands beside him and watches. A while later, he goes to the oven and checks on the pizza, shifting it around in the oven to ensure it is evenly baked.	Max showing he knew what to do in this kitchen. Max observing.
	Vincent, who is based at Joai Asian, has been asked to man the carving station tonight. He checks on the buffet dishes and comes over to Kaven's to alert Weng whenever a dish needed replenishing. Weng tells Max it was no good to be stuck at the carving station because one doesn't learn anything performing this function. He said it was an extremely boring role and if he was ever asked to man the carving station on a regular basis, he would quit the job.	
2030	Max makes another pizza. Max picks up an order for Vegetable Neapolita and Weng tells him to cook it as he watches. He taught Max to make this dish a few days ago. When it is completed, Weng seems pleased with the result. He takes the plate and places it on the service counter.	Max showing he knew what to do in this kitchen. Validation from Weng who performs the secondary role of taking the plate to the service counter.
	An order for Pasta Vongole comes in and Max is asked to cook it. Weng supervises him and reminds him of the ingredients to add.	
	When Max has made both pasta dishes, he takes out his notebook and jots down the ingredients for both dishes.	Max the student
2100	There's an order for mussels. Weng asks Max to fry it. Max does so under his supervision. When it is completed, Weng looks pleased with the dish.	
2130	Max makes another Vegetable Neapolita. The kitchen is less busy now. Samy starts packing things away. Weng and Max stand around. Max waits for the order to 'fire' the Vegetable Neapolita.	Max showing he knew what to do in this kitchen.
2135	Just as the kitchen is preparing to close, an order for four lobster thermidors, one black cod and one portobello mushroom comes in. Weng starts frying the cod, Leonard prepares the portobello mushroom and	Max speaks to Leonard in Mandarin.

	Samy prepares the lobsters. Max, who is still trying to learn how to cut up the lobster, observes by Samy's side. Max then goes over to Leonard and observes by his side. He asks Leonard if the Portobello mushroom had to be grilled after pan-frying and Leonard says, yes, for a while. Max plates and sends the Vegetable Neapolita out.	
	Max opens the chiller drawer and checks on the ingredients. He goes to the chiller to get mushrooms and replenishes the mushroom insert in the drawer. He steps out from the chiller and surveys the kitchen. Then he scoops cheese onto the lobsters and places them into the oven. When the lobsters are ready, Samy arranges the settings for the orders and alerts the servers to pick them up.	<p>Max showing he knew what to do in the kitchen. Max taking the initiative.</p> <p>The chef needs to ensure he has enough ingredients to hand during service. This is why it was necessary to do the mise-en-place. But ingredients run out when there is an unexpectedly high number of orders for certain menu items and have to be replenished during service.</p>
2210	We are standing around and waiting for orders. Samy continues to pack away ingredients, wipe table tops and wash used containers. Another three pizzas are ordered and Max prepares them.	
	Max is dismissed at 2300hrs.	

Appendix 7 Activities in data analysis in Stage 2: Immersion

The following are extracted from my memos as examples to illustrate some of the thinking in the analytical process during immersion.

Activity	Extract from memos
Monitor and review	The other thing I'm doing as I continue coding is monitoring and reviewing what I'm coding and asking myself if something fits into an existing node or requires a new one or if several nodes should be collapsed into one. I am hesitant about collapsing nodes at the moment and have been writing memos to remind myself of things. And then I look at the coded extracts in the nodes and check that all of them belong there.
Refining categories	After coding another three sources today, I took a break to review my nodes, specifically my 'Kitchen -' nodes. I child-ed several nodes to parent nodes ('Kitchen - Chefs doing identity' and 'Kitchen - Teaching') and in the process, renamed some nodes and came up with an overall parent node to cover the child notes. Re-organising the nodes does make it easier to see some major themes and perhaps will help me build my picture. It's interesting that as I merge nodes and try to see relationships, I begin to be clearer in my head where each extract should go.
Establishing relationships	<p>I am checking nodes with parent-child relationships and see if they really are related in that way (which I take to mean 'an aspect of') or whether they really should be separate nodes. In doing so, I have actually removed one such relationship and re-coded the nodes to describe the extracts more specifically. Before this, I had many individual nodes and I was worrying about proliferating categories and not knowing where to stop. I feel encouraged now that there are connections that can be made. Of course there is the question about whether I'm going at it in a way that's justified in qualitative data analysis. And I think another test would be whether approaching the 'Trainee -' nodes in the same manner yields the same results i.e. allowing me to find relationships. But I must not be tempted to keep collapsing nodes under broader ones as I code or I may end up limiting my analysis.</p> <p>Perhaps the way to go is to keep proliferating categories as I analyse my data, take stock periodically and organise my nodes. This would direct and focus my attention on what I want to analyse and the emerging story I want to tell. This way of working with my nodes has not only given me hope that I have a story emerging but also removed my worries about proliferating too many categories - keep coming up with them and then build them into something broader later. Of course, after coming up with the broader headings, I now have another happy problem of making sure the parent nodes are clearly defined and separate and the children ones fit within them (see your TO DO item #1).</p>
Making comparisons	What's the difference between the trainee categories of 'Observations about work' and 'Commenting on work in the kitchen'? The former is about what trainees have observed

	<p>('seen') during the course of their placement while the latter is about their feelings/thoughts ('think' and 'feel') towards work in the kitchen? Then should it be 'Feelings on work' instead of 'Commenting on work'? I have decided to stay with 'Commenting' until further data analysis suggests 'Feelings' would work better. These two categories are going to give you an idea of their experience - what they see and feel/think about work placement.</p>
Asking questions	<p>Is it easier to originate in some kitchens and not others? Why? Does one always have to have something to do? Do workers always find something to assign trainees to do? What would this mean? That one should keep busy in the kitchen?</p>
Reflections	<p>I'm introducing a new node called TALK to collect all references that involve exchanges between workers and trainees. In order to compare patterns here with the actions, I will try to use the same categories as the action references. Let's see how this works out. It's very very interesting when I look closely at the TALK. For example, check out how Shankar points out Max's mistakes with the task of cutting the pumpkins. Couched, packaged as advice, slips in the action that needs correcting. And check out Max's responses. He seems receptive. He responds to and acknowledges Shankar's comments. Compare this to Max's response with Weng and Peter pointing out his mistakes. With the former, he doesn't respond and I had commented there that I thought this might be due to Max's reticent nature. But then with Peter, he attempts to explain and defend himself. He doesn't do this with Shankar; he is almost happy with Shankar. There can be many reasons for the different outcomes of course but no doubt, the fact is that the different interactions for the same purpose have produced different responses. Think about how far you might go with this.</p>
Mental dialogue	<p>Am I focussing too much and too narrowly on the notions of learning and identity construction, although that sounds the right thing since that's what my project is about? Can I be sure of explaining or arguing why those references in 'Constructing Max' are 'constructions'? This is partly because I don't have any analytical tool to use - sure, FTAs are one but whether they are useful to show constructions, I'm not sure. I'm also wondering how to make the link between learning and identity construction. I guess the process of identity construction and contesting alternative constructions is a part of the learning process in socialisation in the sense that particular identities seem more favourable and are therefore advantageous. And learning (to work) is a part of the process of identity construction in socialisation to the work world. WAIT! Hang on, how do you know that he's actually <i>learning</i> anything? Well, he's been validated many many times. But do you have an example of validation for every time you say he was learning something?</p>
'Problem'-solving	<p>You have just organised your child nodes for 'Trainee - Doing service' and realised you don't have references for Directed and Supervised. You think that's because all Directed + Supervised</p>

	<p>under the 'Doing Service' node would be gathered in the child nodes for 'Teaching'. You think then that this seems logical because there is no separate teaching going on, that the references in the nodes under 'Teaching' are the same as Directed + Supervised and that's why they hadn't been gathered into the child nodes for 'Doing Service' which is why when you organise the child nodes for it, there are no references for Directed + Supervised; all the other combinations had references: Directed + Independent, Originating + Independent and Originating + Supervised. As you checked through your references, you also found that you had a reference that was Doing Service + Directed + Supervised + Originated. This is clearly contradictory because directed and originated are antonyms. This situation arose because the particular reference (FN, Kaven's, 121004, 1845b) had Max originating from the order ticket (hence 'originating') and he was asked to cook the order and was supervised (hence 'directed' and 'supervised', and under 'Doing Service' since the action came from origination on the order ticket). You decided that this wouldn't do because it would be confusing re Doing Service + Directed + Supervised + Originated, even if it's possible to see that there's no contradiction since the originating action referred to the order ticket whereas the others referred to the preparation of the order itself i.e. it is through origination that all the other actions happened. So you decided to go back to seeing 'Originating' as a separate node in itself and you removed it as a child node under 'Doing Service'. Then you looked through all the references for 'Originating' and organised them into seven child nodes. What you're struggling with to some extent is how to link origination with doing service. And what you came up with is to have a child node under the parent node of origination to collect the 'doing service' references. Then you created other child nodes to collect references to origination involving other circumstances such as 'doing ancillary tasks' (as opposed to 'doing service' and whether or not the trainee was supervised after the origination ('with' and 'without supervision')). These would help you compare the circumstances of origination.</p>
Breaking the gridlock	<p>I think it's interesting that you started looking at assigned tasks first and I think that's because you are trying to get away from the idea of origination. That's great and in the end, both of them might get you somewhere i.e. assigned tasks and non-assigned (origination). But you should also leave other options open. Nonetheless, you have two days to play around with this idea before coding some more fieldnotes.</p>
Taking stock	<p>Reviewing my nodes again today. So starting with initial open coding of all the fieldnotes and making memos along the way, I started to feel strongly about looking at the ways in which trainees learn at placement and what they were being taught, specifically, the nodes 'Trainee - Learning' and 'Kitchen - Teaching'. This was because of two things: firstly, references seemed to be frequently coded at these two nodes and</p>

	<p>secondly, there was something interesting about the way one gets to learn at the workplace which seems to me to be quite different from college, namely that learning at work was 'opportunistic', and if this can be established, we should see how the trainee then organises his activities so that he can grab these opportunities.</p> <p>I proceeded to check my references in 'Trainee - Learning' and... [NOTES CONTINUE]</p>
External input	<p>Are there similar routines in similar stages of each cycle (duration in a kitchen)? Is this what KR was referring to on 2 Oct? Check supervision notes.</p>